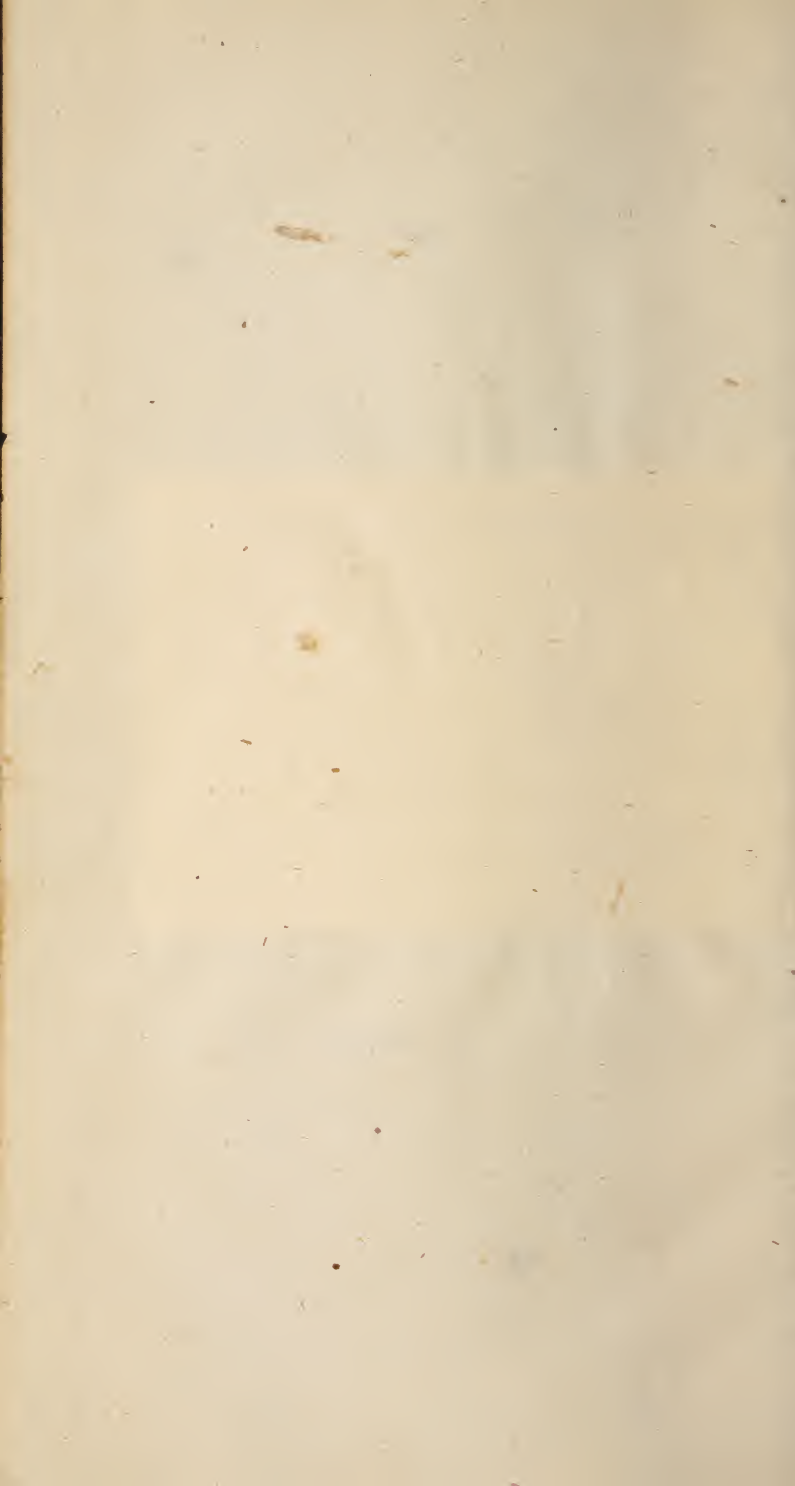


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



A VOICE
FROM THE DANUBE.



OR,
THE TRUE STATE OF THE CASE BETWEEN
AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY.

“Avant de désirer fortement une chose, il faut examiner quel est le bonheur de celui qui la possède.”—ROCHEFOUCAULT.

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

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The Prince Metternich.

PRINCE,

Præcipuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur,
atque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamiâ metus
sit.—TACITUS, ANNALES, iii. s. 65.

With respectful obedience,

THE AUTHOR.

DECEMBER 20, 1849.

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A VOICE FROM THE DANUBE.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CONDITION OF HUNGARY.

Presburg, October, 1849.

AFTER a painful and somewhat anxious journey from the south, I at length reached this city, where I am now enjoying comparative quiet and repose, although greatly fatigued both in body and in mind. You will have received in my last communication a rough and rapid sketch of the country on the right bank of the Drave, which comprises the finest portion of Slavonia, and were the people as industrious and skilful, as the land is rich and exuberant, there is scarcely a range of country throughout Europe

that could vie with it in beauty, abundance and fertility. Nevertheless, the Slavonian farmer is greatly in advance of his Hungarian neighbour as regards agriculture, for the rich vintage, the crops of rice and wheat, and even cotton, which has been partially cultivated, are fully equal to those of the Banat, and in most instances surpass the crops which are grown to the northward of the Danube. Were these Slavonians possessed of good roads, and easy communications, they would soon become large exporters of agricultural produce, for the valley which lies between the Save and the Drave is capable of almost unlimited cultivation, from its peculiar physical conformation. Irrespective of the plains watered by the Danube, this valley is almost capable of becoming the granary for the whole of Europe ; but, while it costs upwards of forty per cent for the transport of corn—the main production—from the interior to the frontier, or, in other words, from Siseck to Fiume, there is little hope of the inhabitants of these almost self-producing regions emerging from their present condition.

But I shall not dwell upon this subject, as you are anxious to know the precise nature of the Hungarian insurrection—the condition of the people, their political relations with the Austrian empire—

and the more immediate causes which have produced that calamitous event.

In times of revolutionary excitement, like those just past, it is difficult to form a correct opinion upon the justice or injustice of any particular movement among a whole people, as the mind is too much absorbed by the passionate sympathies of party feeling—too much warped by political idiosyncracies. The same object looked at from different points of view is apt to assume a variety of aspects, even when the eye of a single individual is directed towards it; how much greater then must be the variety when a myriad of eyes are upon it—scanning it, colouring it, each according to the sympathy, or prejudice, of his single mind? Hence arises that startling contrariety of opinion among men upon a subject, which, apparently, is obvious to the plainest understanding. Of all the movements which have shaken Europe to her centre, during the last two years, there is, perhaps, not one which has been more misrepresented, or more misunderstood, than that of Hungary against Austria. It was enough for the unthinking mass to know or, rather, to be told, that the Hungarians were fighting for freedom, and that Austria was disputing that freedom at the point of the bayonet. As a matter of course, the

two parties were respectively ranged as glorious martyrs on the one hand—as deadly tyrants on the other ; both representations, it is almost unnecessary to observe, equally in the extreme, and equally wrong. Something was claimed by the *many*, and refused by the *few* ; that was quite sufficient in the minds of a large, but not very reasonable party, to pronounce those claims right, and the refusal of them, decidedly wrong. In the heat of passion, which such a division invariably generates, the common sense view of the question was completely lost sight of ; the pseudo-friends of Hungary exaggerated her real grievances and diminished her faults—her *apparent* enemies acted precisely *à converso* ; the one insisting too largely upon her good qualities, the other, perhaps, colouring her bad ones too highly. Now that the smoke has somewhat cleared away, and the excitement, which almost universally pervaded the public mind, as though it were under the influence of a galvanic battery, has calmed down to a comparatively decent state, it may not be amiss to take a cool survey of recent events, in order that they may be understood aright ; and, also, in order that the whole machinery which worked out those events, may be narrowly examined, and its respective portions duly esti-

mated, so that the praise or censure may be justly meted out to each and to all of its parts.

It is unnecessary, therefore, to observe that I would not mislead you willingly on any subject, however limited might be my information upon it; much less then ought I to mislead you upon this, having acquired, as I think, a thorough knowledge of its bearings — not altogether by hearsay and reading, but mainly from personal observation, and, in many instances, from the perusal of documents which do not generally meet the public eye.

First, then, permit me to give you a sketch of the Hungarian people; secondly, a brief outline of the Hungarian constitution; thirdly, the political relations between the Hungarians and the Austrians; fourthly, the precise nature of the quarrel between them; and, fifthly, a comparative view of the condition of the subjects of Austria, and those of one or two other European states.

Until a comparatively recent period, thanks to the newspaper press,* the interior of Hungary was

* The correspondents of the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle* have been singularly correct on Hungarian matters during the recent disturbances, and the only marvel was, among those who were comparatively well-informed, how few inaccuracies,

almost as little known as that of China; and Englishmen heard of the Theiss, the Waag, and the Drave, with the same hazy wonderment as they occasionally hear of the rivers in the interior of the Celestial empire, and knew about as much of the people who inhabit their banks—of their habits, of their wants, and of the distinctive features of their character. Here and there, it is true, within the last quarter of a century, we find a solitary traveller, or, perchance, a courier *en route* for the Turkish capital, skimming along the broad highways of Hungary—sometimes steaming it down the Danube, for a short distance on that noble river, at others boating it up the Drave, on his way back to Styria or the Adriatic, but seldom penetrating far into the interior of the country—who may chance to have given the world a skin-deep sketch of its condition; but, as to the internal workings of Hungarian society—its peculiar character and construction—the *differentia*, if I may be allowed the term, of the Hungarian people, together with their local and general politics, these, for the most part, are but indistinctly shadowed out, and, in many instances, are not indicated even by the faintest outline.

either as regards events, or the more immediate causes which led to them, were committed by those writers.

Hungary has been generally, but erroneously, considered either as a province of the Austrian empire, or as a separate and distinct state. It was neither the one nor the other, although the same sovereign ruled over both countries. Yet, at the same time, Hungary had her separate constitution, her own laws, and her distinct internal administration. By the Pragmatic sanction of 1723, the two crowns were united under one head, or, as the Diætal Convention terms it, *by a joint, indivisible, and mutual union*.* The *Convention* clearly contemplated the

* The second article of the *Convention* of 1723, with trifling alterations, runs textually as follows:—"In defectu sexus masculini sacratissimæ Cæsareæ et Regiæ Majestatis. Jus Hæreditarium succedendi in Hungariæ Regnum et Coronam ad eundemque pertinentes Partes Provincias et Regna etiam in Sexum Augustæ Domus suæ Austriacæ fœmineum, primo loco quidem ab autefatâ modo Regnante sacratissimâ C. et R. Majestate olim, et hujus defectu, a divo olim JOSEPHO, his quoque deficientibus, et lumbis Divi olim LEOPOLDI Imperatorum et Regum Hungariæ descendentes, eorem demque legitimos Romano-Catholicos successores utriusque sexus Austriæ Archiduces juxta stabilitum per S. C. et R. Majestatem in alii quoque suis regnis et provinciis hæreditariis in et extra Germaniam sitis *primogenituræ ordinem jure et ordine præmisso indivisibiliter ac inseparabiliter invicem et insimul et unâ cum Regno Hungariæ et partibus*, Regnis, et Provinciis eidem annexis hæreditarie possidentis regendam et gubernandam transferunt, et memoratam successionem acceptant, taliterque eandem

union of the crowns of Hungary and the Austrian (then German) states, only during the subsistence of the entail of Charles VI. ; and, in the event of the issue of Leopold not continuing in the direct line, the right would have again reverted to the Hungarians to elect another monarch. The incorporation of the two kingdoms was expressly guarded against by the words of the text, quoted below, which distinctly state that they shall be ruled *invicem, insimul, et una*, therefore the internal independence, and the constitutional rights of the Hungarians were fully recognised, even had there been no other enactments to that effect.

Charles VI., finding himself without male issue,

successionem Fœmineam in Augustâ Domo Austriaca introductum et agnitum (extensis ad eam, nunc pro tunc, articulis 2 et 3 Anni 1687, et pariter 2 et 3 Anni 1715), juxta Ordinem supradictum stabilitum, et una cum præmissis æquè modo prævio per S. C. et R. M. clementissimè confirmatis diplomaticis aliisque prædeclaratis Statuum et ordinum Regni partiumque Regnorum et provinciarum eidem annexarum libertalibus et prerogativis ad tenorem præcimatorum Articulorum futuro semper temporibus occasione coronationis observandam determinant, et nonnisi post omnimodum prædicti sexus defectum avitam et veterem approbatam que et receptam consuetudinem prærogativam que Statuum et Ordinum in electione et coronatione regum locum habituram reservant intelligendam."

secured the succession to the throne of Austria to Maria Theresa, the heroic Queen of Hungary; and the struggle which she made to maintain her rights against the coalesced power of France, Spain, Bavaria, and Prussia, furnishes some of the most affecting incidents of modern history. The parallel, which has frequently been drawn, between England and Hanover, on the one side, and Austria and Hungary on the other, is, therefore, not even approximately correct. The junction of the crowns of Hanover and England was an *accident*, whose tenure has terminated: while that of Hungary and Austria was by special compact, whose inseparability and indivisibility were distinctly guaranteed. Again, the succession to the throne of Hanover was vested in the male heirs of the royal line, by virtue of which, the present King of Hanover ascended the throne of that country, otherwise it would have formed an appendage of the crown of Queen Victoria; nor was the administration of Hungary, as regards Austria, in any one point analogous to that of Hanover and of England, for the laws of 1741 of the former country, expressly mention a common ministry of State, in addition to which, Hungary furnished (with the consent of the Diet), a contingent of troops to the Austrian army,

while Hanover was administered quite independent of England, and never yielded a farthing of revenue, nor furnished a single troop to the army of the latter, although the same monarch united both crowns in his own person.

The limited rights and duties of the crown of Austria, in respect to Hungary, were exercised through a vice-regal council at Buda, composed entirely of Hungarians, under the presidency of the Palatine, who was also President of the Upper House of Diet, and considered as the constitutional inter-agent between the two kingdoms. The Palatine was latterly an Archduke of the Imperial House, therefore, not necessarily, an Hungarian, and was elected by the Diet from three candidates proposed by Austria, his office being for life.

The residence of this high functionary in Hungary was tacitly understood and generally observed, although not expressly stipulated in the pragmatic sanction, and was deemed a circumstance of considerable importance by the Hungarians. All the officers of the Palatine were Hungarians, and from that circumstance alone, he naturally sought to identify himself with the peculiar habits and feelings of the people over whom he presided.

Since the year 1526, the Hungarian monarch

has, from the conjunction of the crowns, and for certain high political reasons, habitually resided in Austria, which is not quite in unison with the laws of Hungary, although it does not absolutely violate them ; but no measure connected with the latter country, however trivial in its nature, ever passed directly through the hands of an Austrian minister. A separate chancellor, and chancery, were established at Vienna for Hungarian affairs, to the duties of which none but Hungarians were eligible, and the chancellor communicated with the sovereign, as King of Hungary, nominally on the footing of a separate and independent interest, but, practically, that independence could not always be maintained.

Hungary was comprised (Transylvania must be excepted, as it had a separate constitution,) of Provincial Hungary, containing—first, the four Hungarian circles ; second, several districts lying within these circles, with separate and distinct privileges ; and, thirdly, Slavonia and Croatia, with the military frontier. The country was divided into fifty-two counties—in Hungary Proper, there were forty-six, in Croatia three, and in Slavonia three.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the physical condition of these divisions, a portion of which

I have already described; but a sketch of the people will enable you to see in a clearer light the nature and character of the Hungarian insurrection, although it may not be quite accurate in all its details. The population of the kingdom has been estimated at 14,000,000 of souls, by some statistis; while M. Becher,* whose immediate connection with the statistical bureau at Vienna, imparts to his estimate a comparative value which cannot be impeached, states it to be upwards of 11,500,000, which may be considered as nearly the number as possible. It is difficult to obtain correct information on this head from Hungary, from the repugnance of the people—in many instances, perhaps, well-founded—to render the Imperial Government any assistance in forming their estimate. The pertinacious and ill-judged attempts of Joseph to innovate upon the long-established, and dearly-cherished, institutions of Hungary, contrary to the legal forms of the constitution. aroused the suspicions of the Hungarians, which had not subsided even up to the recent outbreak; therefore all the knowledge, of a statistical nature,

* See "Statistische Uebersicht der Bevölkerung Oesterreichischen Monarchie." Von Siegfried Becher, Doctor der Rechte, 1840.

which the government possesses of that country, dates from the estimates made by that monarch.

The first estimate took place in 1786, and, as it was considered inaccurate, a second was instituted in 1787; and, according to M. Becher, the difference between the two estimates has been erroneously assumed, as shewing the increase of population within the year, and has furnished *data* for calculating it ever since. The Hungarians Proper, as they are called, comprise a considerable portion of the eleven millions; the Slovacks another, while the remainder is principally made up of Germans and Wallachians. Among these various sections of the people of Hungary, you will find a great diversity of character, of capacity, of habits, and, also, of language; the latter being considered a point of importance, especially among the genuine Magyars, as the establishment of a Magyar Academy at Pesth clearly testifies, which shall be noticed in due course. The Hungarian language is generally spoken by the smaller, and by many of the large landed proprietors, although German is often the idiom for ordinary conversation amongst the more elevated portion of society; but Latin was generally spoken by the educated classes,—by the proprietors, the clergy, and the advocates half a

century ago. In the local courts, and in the county meetings, Hungarian has been uniformly used since 1825; and by an edict of 1837, the Diet expressly enacted, that the Magyar tongue should be considered as the *legal* exponent in all cases of dispute and trial. There has hitherto been but little homogeneity of thought, feeling, or action among the Hungarian people, as a body; except in one sense, the privileged classes of every grade appearing, with rare exceptions, extremely desirous of maintaining their feudal-hold upon the peasant-class.

The Hungarians Proper are the Magyars, whose origin is traced to an Asiatic race; and their wild and wandering habits, and the peculiar structure of their native language, seem to favour such an hypothesis. The genuine Magyar may be denominated a lover of freedom and nature, and appears to despise the life of a merchant or artizan, his principal occupation consisting in agricultural, or rather pastoral pursuits, for his time, when at work, is generally consumed in attending his herds of cattle, which he rears with apparent ease and delight. In this respect, he resembles the Bushman in the wilds of New South Wales, for the Hungarian, like the Bushman, frequently passes the night in the open air, while tending his flocks, and

contents himself with the bare ground, and his *bunda*, or sheep's skin, to rest his head upon. When the Magyar peasant is seated on his horse, with his long hair streaming in the wind, as he gallops over the Hungarian plains in pursuit of his herds of cattle, he presents the very counterpart to the stockman in the far Bush, when the latter is engaged in driving his wayward oxen into the stock-yard.

The Hungarian peasant is naturally attached to his horse, having learned to ride from his infancy ; he is also brave, high-spirited, and docile, yet alternately indolent or energetic, just as the incidents of his occupation may chance to develope his feelings. Nevertheless, he seems reluctant to apply himself to continuous and steady industry. In personal appearance, he is generally handsome ; his features assuming, occasionally, a noble cast of thought and expression, yet, withal, sombre and melancholy. The Hungarians are, for the most part, tall, and well-formed in figure, but in demeanour, unless aroused, they are habitually gentle and unobtrusive.

The Magyars comprise about 5,000,000 of the inhabitants of Hungary, and many of them entertain a marked antipathy to the Germans, who may chance to be settled amongst them. The Slovacks

comprise the Roscians (called Illyrians and Serbians), the Croatians, and the Ruthenes, or little Russians, and number about 4,000,000 souls. The Slovacks are chiefly on the borders of Moravia; they are extremely partial to music, dancing, and gaiety, but their *morale* was not considered by the Magyars of so elevated a nature as their own, although they are quick in intellect, and, altogether, are an intelligent race of men.

The Slovack portion of the inhabitants are generally employed in the mines and manufactories, the Magyars, as I have already remarked, mostly entertaining a strong antipathy to such steady and laborious occupations. The Croats, who enjoyed certain peculiar rights in their own country, make good soldiers, and compose a considerable portion of the Austrian army; and, to their credit be it mentioned, they are, for the most part, brave, docile, and devotedly attached to their leaders. There is also a strong national feeling blended with their character, and their allegiance to the Austrian Empire is singularly marked, unshaken, and enduring.

The Ruthenes are a singular people, and may be likened to the Irish in some respects, especially as regards their use of the potatoe, which con-

stitutes their principal food. In the harvest-time these Hungarian-Irish flock down from their mountain regions to assist the Magyar in gathering his crops, when they generally earn sufficient food to carry them through the winter, with the aid of their favourite root, which they cultivate to a considerable extent. Like the cottier in Ireland, the Ruthenian has little more to subsist upon than his potatoe during the winter months, as the minute sub-division of the soil, which generally precludes even a moderately productive cultivation, too frequently leaves him in the slough of poverty, and subjects him to the sharp twitches of periodical destitution. The Germans are but thinly scattered over Hungary, and principally are congregated in the southern districts; they are peaceful, industrious, and, for the most part, prosperous in their pursuits; nevertheless, their example has had but little effect upon the Magyar, who is far from being weaned to the settled habits of his neighbour. There are about 1,000,000 of Germans in Hungary, the majority of whom are settled in the Banat, where they were specially inducted by Maria Theresa and Joseph II., for certain political purposes, which have been but partially realized. The free boroughs and mining

towns are principally composed of the descendants of these Germans, who are noted for their orderly conduct, and their thriving pursuits.

The above sketch of the Hungarian people is but roughly hit off—a mere outline, as it were—nevertheless, it will afford you a clear insight, as you read on, into the nature and character of the recent disturbances which, unhappily, have so fearfully decimated that fine country. I shall now give you an historical sketch of the ancient Hungarian Constitution, as it existed before April, 1848, and shall compress it into as brief a space as possible, although the mass of materials from which it is drawn will necessarily render the compression somewhat difficult.

CHAPTER II.

THE HUNGARIAN CONSTITUTION.

THE Magyar occupation of Hungary may be traced to the ninth century. An Asiatic horde, under Almos, their leader, crossed the Carpathian Chain, and spread themselves over the rich plains, watered by the Theiss and the Danube. These wandering hordes quickly subdued their predecessors—the Moravians, Bulgarians, and Wallachians—either by driving them to the mountains, or by converting them into slaves. The present race of Magyars are principally descended from these Asiatic conquerors, and have many of the characteristics of that wild and wandering race. The Magyars, from this circumstance, consider

themselves as the real Hungarian nation; the Slovacks, Wallachians, and Moravians, forming, as it were, the substratum upon which the former repose, for the distinction, even at the present time, is marked and prominent in many respects, between them. The germ of the Hungarian Constitution may be traced to the stipulations entered into between Almos, the leader of the Magyars, and his principal chiefs and followers. The latter agreed that his family should be acknowledged as their hereditary head, but that they and their descendants should participate in the government; at the same time it was stipulated that the soil should be divided, and that all, according to their rank, should share in the division. A similar compact was made by the Goths, when they first conquered Spain, and may be said to form part of the feudal system which supplanted the old Roman rule, and the same system of government was ultimately established in all the states of Europe. Such, in fact, may be considered the nucleus of the Hungarian Constitution, which remains to this day, with a few comparatively insignificant alterations

The first stipulation rendered the monarchy hereditary in a single family, but not in the lineal

descendants of an individual; therefore, within certain limits, it was elective.

The second stipulation provided a number of hereditary counsellors, and the third a numerous class of territorial nobility; but these two powerful aristocratic elements, it was soon found, were introduced without any counterpoising weight. In unison with this compact, the land was divided, and the larger portion of its former possessors, principally of Slavonic origin, were almost immediately reduced to a state of servitude. The Magyars were further divided into tribes, and each tribe was governed by its own chieftain. National assemblies were at length held, in which every man, bearing arms, had a right to appear; but the affairs of the nation were, in reality, conducted by a few powerful chiefs, who were connected in some degree with the reigning family.

On the introduction of Christianity in the eleventh century, the Constitution underwent some slight changes, for St. Stephen, who then filled the throne, being not only a great saint, but likewise a good king, strenuously endeavoured to improve the general condition of the whole of his subjects. That monarch commenced his reforms by restraining the authority of the more powerful

chiefs, who pressed most heavily, not only upon their immediate inferiors, but, also, upon the great mass of the people. Stephen divided his kingdom into sixty-five counties, which had the effect of neutralizing the power of the nobility, as he delegated both the civil and military authority to the *Supremus Comes*—an official strikingly analogous to the Lord Lieutenant of counties in England. The dignity of Palatine was also created by that monarch.

Under the Arpad dynasty, there appears to have been seven distinct classes of people in Hungary; there were slaves, serfs, free peasants, burghers of free towns, feudal vassals who were subject to the authority of an official called the *Royal Castellan*, one of whom presided over each county; feudal vassals (*servientes regii*) who held their land immediately from the king, and, lastly, the descendants of the conquering chiefs, whose estates were exempt from every contribution, or feudal service, except the obligation of defending the country, in case of invasion. These great chiefs generally held large domains, and were considered the real nobility, although the *servientes regii* esteemed themselves equally noble. The representatives of the nation were the great landed proprietors, and

the higher order of the clergy, together with the Lords-Lieutenant of the counties, and the principal officers of the crown; but, as the latter functionaries were mainly dependent upon the king, the monarchical element was soon found to preponderate too largely.

The nobles, especially the inferior class, at length made a number of complaints against the abuse of the royal authority; and a series of events, similar in character to those which occurred in England, and at nearly the same time took place in Hungary, by which the position of the great body of the privileged class underwent a material change. In the year 1215, the Barons of England compelled John to sign *Magna Charta*; and in 1222, the nobles of Hungary wrested the *Golden Bull* from Andrew II., by which their rights, like those of the English Barons, were legally guaranteed. But the unprivileged class, in both countries, were but faintly mentioned in those national charters, therefore it may be safely inferred, that the subordinate many were scarcely entitled to any political consideration whatever. *Magna Charta* was the work of the high clergy, and the powerful barons in England; but the *Golden Bull*, on the contrary, was principally obtained by the inferior nobles of Hungary, not

only at the cost of the king ; but, also, at the cost of the more powerful nobles. Since that period, the English Constitution has gradually developed itself, according to the growing wants, and the expanding spirit of the British character ; while the Hungarian Constitution has undergone but a comparatively slight change, as it still rests almost exclusively upon the provisions of the Golden Bull, and it is only within these few years that attempts have been made to diminish its aristocratic tendencies by rendering it, instead of the narrow code of a privileged class, the really effective charter of an independent people.

Delegates were first sent to the Diet, from the Free towns, in the latter end of the fourteenth century. National Diets, at which every noble had a right to appear, were frequently held in the field of Rákös, near Pesth ; they were sometimes attended by 50,000 armed men on horseback, and it was, most probably, from these numerous assemblies, that the Hungarians have derived the custom, still in general use, of voting by acclamation, although actual voting in the Diet commenced in 1825.

Let us go a little more into detail of Hungarian history, as we then shall be better able to trace

the thread which connects the past with the present, and to account for the comparatively unchangeable nature of Hungarian institutions in the present day. It seems strange, at the first glance at the political institutions of Hungary, that she should have so long "potted and preserved" the feudal principles in her laws and constitution, after the greater portion of enlightened Europe had long abandoned them; yet, the deeper we look into her history, and the more attentively we study the incidents which peculiarly distinguish it from that of most of her immediate neighbours, we shall only be surprised that she has preserved so much, comparatively speaking, of what is really good. There must be some noble element in the Hungarian mind, or it could not have survived the depreciating influences which have so long surrounded it. The geographical position of Hungary will, perhaps, best explain the purport of my remarks; and, in this respect, the incidents of her history deserve the deepest attention.

Hungary has played an important part in the political history of Europe, and was mainly instrumental in arresting the progress of Islamism, when it threatened to realize the hypothesis of

Gibbon—of supplanting high-church politics and muddy Port at Oxford, by simple water and pure fatalism—or, in more sober terms, when the Turks were under the walls of Vienna, and their spirited troops appeared as the invincibles of the age. The name of Hunyades and of his son, Mathias Corvinus, will immediately present themselves to the memory of the historical student, especially the latter, whose encouragement of literature and the fine arts, supplied the Corinthian capital to the column which his father had so bravely erected. Again, who can read but with the most touching emotion the disasters of the field of Mohács, when the pride of Hungarian chivalry was laid low by Solyman the Magnificent, whose armies threatened the total annihilation of Hungary; and, at a more recent period, the struggles of the latter with the Austrian dynasty, the civil wars which sprung from the followers of Botskai, and the Rákoczys, which cost her so much to suppress, will be perused with a truly painful interest.

Even so lately as 1682, the Turks had possession of Vienna, after sweeping over the plains of Hungary with the most devastating freedom; and it was not till 1686 that those ruthless invaders were entirely driven out of the latter country,

so fiercely did the Mussulman fight for its permanent possession. In 1699 the Peace of Carlowitz released Transylvania and Croatia from the Turkish sway; and in 1718 the Banat was ceded by the Treaty of Passarowitz to Austria, who was then fighting with Hungary against the Turks, although that province was not joined to the latter till the year 1778. The devastation which the inroads of the Turks had made, continued for some time after they were driven out of the country, and left behind so keen a recollection in the minds of the Hungarians of those ruthless aggressors, that they were constantly apprehensive of similar evils being inflicted upon them; hence, in a great measure, the endurance of their feudal organization, which enabled them to resist their enemy, and whose daring and aggressive character kept them continually on the alert. The Hungarian may be said to have formed the frontier guard of Europe against its Mussulman assailant. It was, therefore, the apprehension of invasion by the Turks, that prolonged the existence of feudal laws in Hungary, long after the causes which first suggested their adoption had ceased to exist, and long after the rest of enlightened Europe had gradually cast them off. It was also natural

that the Hungarian nobles, feeling that they were the strong arm of national independence, should claim exemption from the ordinary duties of citizens, who had not borne the brunt of the battle, and should be reluctant to yield to the subsidiary taxation of ordinary subjects. The same feeling pervaded the privileged classes throughout Europe, when they were performing duties analogous to those of the Hungarian nobles; and the only difference between the latter and their European predecessors appears to be—that circumstances necessarily prolonged the existence of feudal institutions in Hungary, while, elsewhere, circumstances had materially diminished their influence; hence, in a great measure the existence of the privileged Hungarian at the present day, and hence, also, the partial extinction of his prototype in other parts of Europe.

The constitution of Hungary may be said to have rested upon the following basis: the supreme executive power was vested in the sovereign, who also enjoyed numerous prerogatives besides. The latter exercised the right of making war or peace, although the laws, as well as the constitutional nature of the government, accorded to the Diet considerable influence in such important matters. The King had,

also, the sole right of creating nobles, conferring titles, dignities, and privileges ; he likewise had the power of granting charters to free towns, though the latter obtained permission from the Diet, before they could send delegates to its sittings—a permission which was not always accorded, as some of the Free Towns did not enjoy that right, although incorporated by the prerogative of the King. The Palatine, and the crown subordinates, were elected by the Diet, but the King appointed all other functionaries appertaining to the government, both civil and military ; although he was expressly precluded from appointing a foreigner to any of the principal offices, so that an Austrian, considered as a foreigner, was not eligible for an appointment. The King also nominated the high ecclesiastical functionaries, and, on the death of a bishop, he had the privilege of retaining the revenues of the diocese for three years previous to appointing a successor ; but this privilege has been seldom exercised in modern times. The King, by the *Jus placeti*, a right which enabled him to hold in check the see of Rome, could prevent any papal bull from being circulated in the kingdom ; and by virtue of the *Jus supremæ inspectiones*, he exercised a revising power over the Protestant and Greek churches, and could compel them to render him an account of their educational

and spiritual affairs. Justice was also administered in the monarch's name, but the latter had no power to change the established forms of proceeding, nor could he alter a single judicial sentence, except by commuting the penalty of death to some milder punishment. It was, moreover, by the authority, and almost at the pleasure, of the crown, that the Diet was prorogued and dissolved; yet these prerogatives were limited, for the meeting of that Assembly could not legally be postponed beyond three years. The legislative propositions to the Diet generally emanated from the crown, which assumed, in most instances, the initiative, and which sanctioned or rejected the decisions of that body at its pleasure.

The crown likewise possessed several important regalia—for instance, the mint, the gold and silver mines, and a monopoly of the sale of salt; in addition to which the revenues of the state were placed completely at its disposal. Confiscated estates also fell to the crown, as well as those of noble families, on the latter becoming extinct. Finally, the King commanded the army, the forts, and the garrisons within the kingdom; but an *insurrection*, or *levy en masse*, could only be decreed by the Diet.

There existed in Hungary, previous to the wild decree of Kossuth, in 1848, a broad distinction be-

tween the privileged, and the unprivileged, classes of society. The former, or *nobles*, constituted, properly speaking, the nation; the latter, or *peasants*, might be designated as the base, upon which the social superstructure was raised. The same framework of society was found in Rome when the patricians, or the *populus*, and the plebeians, or the *plebs*, were the only two distinctions among that people. In some other respects, also, the Hungarian institutions resembled those of the ancient Italian Republic; the government being (for we shall assume the abolition of the privilege-decree non-existent) entirely in the hands of the nobles, through their commanding the Diets, besides possessing the exclusive right of holding land, both of which were strikingly analogous to the powers exercised by the Patricians against the mass of the Roman people. It may be said that such a condition is necessary to the development of a raw and undisciplined people, and that the time arrives, in every state, when the unprivileged have a right to be admitted among the privileged; yet this consummation has rarely been effected, except by a bold and vigorous stroke of tyranny, the contrary course generally prevailing amongst nations—the privileged classes losing their old political rights more

frequently than the unprivileged obtaining new ones. In Hungary, the privileged class have strenuously resisted all encroachments on their rights, from the fear that they should be reduced to the level of the unprivileged, and this, we shall find, has been one of the great stumbling-blocks between the government and the nobles of that country. The privileged class in Hungary, we must also remark, are so numerous that they form, as it were, a democracy among themselves; so much so, that wealth and rank render a man of influence, comparatively speaking, a political nullity, especially if he happen to be a magnate, who is generally presumed to have interests opposed to the inferior nobles.

First, then, of the *populus*, or privileged class. This class comprised the magnates, the prelates, the simple nobles, and the Royal Boroughs. The number of nobles families is stated to be about 70,000, which includes the magnates and prelates, who are not very numerous. The Royal Boroughs are forty-nine in number, and contain about 400,000 people. These boroughs possessed a charter, similar to the municipal corporations of England, and were independent of the county in which they were situate; and, as each borough *in corpore* was equivalent to

one noble, they were represented, although not in the same relative proportion, in the Diet. The individual burgher can acquire and possess real property like a noble, but only within the limits of his borough ; nevertheless, they were subject to the impost of tithes and paid taxes, from both of which the noble was exempt. The magnates and prelates differed from the other nobles, not in civil rights, but in political rank ; the former being entitled to a seat in the Upper House of Parliament, like our peers and bishops. In most other respects the wealthiest magnate—an Esterhazy, for example—had no greater privileges than the commonest noble who pursues the occupation of a butcher or a baker.

The number of nobles in Hungary is roughly estimated at 800,000 persons, which appears enormously disproportionate to the mass of the people ; so it would be were the term *noble* indicative of the wealth, rank, and ease, which generally appertains to it in England. On the contrary, thousands of the Hungarian nobles cultivate their own fields, and have no peasants under them ; others, again, occupy copy-hold lands, like the peasant, and perform similar duties to the proprietor or their superior lords. Many nobles are also butchers, tailors, and boot-makers, for the latter occupations are consi-

dered honourable by the Hungarians, as they are partial to dress, and pique themselves upon the uniformity, nay, almost fixity, of their costumes. In short, these poor nobles permeate almost every grade of society, and are sometimes stewards to their more wealthy peers; they are also to be found in the ranks of advocates and physicians, and occasionally among the clergy and professors. Whatever may be their position in society, these petty nobles are exceedingly jealous of their privileges and tenacious of their rank; and this feeling, as may naturally be inferred, in a majority of instances, proves more injurious than advantageous to their interests.

Many of the nobles, however, are of old and distinguished families, and possess estates, some large, others moderate, the latter varying through almost all the degrees of relative magnitude and wealth. The adult males in these noble families, whatever might be the extent of their possessions, whether great or small, were alone entitled to exercise the elective franchise. These young nobles were also exempt from all the burdens which pressed so heavily on the peasant class.

In the Upper House of Parliament, or *Table*, as it was called, the Magnates and Prelates had

seats. A Magnate could also be elected deputy for a county in the Lower House. The Prelates were the heads of the Catholic and Greek churches, the Protestants not enjoying such a distinction. The Magnates had partly an official, and partly an hereditary rank; the former comprising the *Barones regni*, such as the Great Judge, the Ban of Croatia, the Royal Treasurer, and the *Obergespann*. The latter official sat in the Upper House by virtue of his office, although he might chance to be only a simple noble. The other class of nobility sat by virtue of hereditary right; but that right was not, as in England, confined to the first-born, the law of primogeniture not being uniformly observed in Hungary. In some noble houses there are entails for the first-born, but they form the exception and not the rule; and the titles of Prince, Count, and Baron were applied to all the members of a magnate family, and not alone to the first-born, or to any particular gradation of birth, as several writers on the Hungarian Constitution have asserted.

The nobles of every class were only bound, in case of war, to act as a militia. Their rising was called an *Insurrection*, which was considered as an equivalent for their exemption from ordinary taxa-

tion. *Particular Insurrection* could be levied by the King, but *General Insurrection* required a special edict of the Diet. The noble paid no taxes, no tithes, no tolls, and was not subject to have the military quartered upon him; neither could he be arrested until the crime had been proved against him, except in cases of high treason, highway robbery, arson, and adultery *in flagranti*. Until the year 1823, the noble alone had the right of acquiring and possessing land in full property; he also governed himself through his nominees in the Diet, whom he secured by the exercise of the franchise in the counties. Each county, by a species of license, may be said to have formed a republic within itself, thoroughly democratic both in form and spirit, and every male noble, when he had attained the age of maturity*—twenty-four years—had an equal right

* The Magyar noble attains his complete majority at twenty-four years of age, when he can enjoy the full rights of property. At sixteen he acquires several rights, such as the right of voting in the Comitats, and in the Diet, and, in fact, may be said to attain his majority at that period, if we except certain rights appertaining to property, which the law strictly enforces. As regards voting in the Diet and in the Comitats, there was no uniform rule observed; in some Comitats, the young magnate could not vote before he had attained his full majority, while in others that privilege was accorded to him when he arrived at

and was presumed to take his share, in framing the bye-laws in his own country, and also in choosing his own magistrate.

The unprivileged class—the *plebs*, or *peasants*, as they are called, form the mass of the population of Hungary. This class is especially worthy of notice, as they must form the nucleus for a regenerative policy. According to the most recent conscription, they number about 1,300,000 families, or, giving five to each family, upwards of 6,000,000 souls. The term *peasant* in Hungary, as elsewhere in many parts of the Continent, has an approximate meaning to the term *copy-holder* in England, but with this significant difference, that it attaches to the person and his heirs, as well as to the ground, whereas in the latter country it simply designates a particular industrial occupation. Formerly, the Hungarian lord granted certain portions of land, to persons of inferior rank, who were to enjoy the *usufruct* of it upon observing two conditions; first, they were to make certain payments in kind,

eighteen years of age; and in several no particular age was required. In the House of Magnates there was no positive rule on the subject of voting, and every male member of a noble house had the right of sitting and voting in that assembly, those rights not being simply confined to the first-born.

and perform certain services for the benefit of the proprietor from whom they held the land : and, secondly, they were to take on themselves all the claims, (except military service), which the state required, or could legally impose.

The Hungarian peasant has passed through various grades of servility, like similar classes in other countries, depending, in a great measure, upon the *mero motu* of his lord. In England, the copy-holder commuted his dependence for periodical payments in money, instead of labour, a long time ago ; and a similar commutation has been gradually spreading throughout Europe, but with this variation, in certain parts of Germany, that the services due to the lord of the soil, are commuted for a sum of money which is paid down at once, instead of a quit-rent ; or for part of the copy-hold, which is ceded by the copy-holder to the lord. In Hungary these services have been regulated by successive edicts of the Diet : but the first effective blow aimed at the feudal condition of the peasant, was the decree of Maria Theresa, issued in 1743, which abolished vassalage and granted the rank of farmers to all who cultivated six acres of land. In 1767, and again in 1773, Maria Theresa recommended to the

Hungarian proprietors the *Urbarium*, which may be called the *peasants' charter*, and introduced it in many places by royal commissioners, but that measure was only finally adopted by the Hungarian Diet in 1791. The regulations of the *Urbarium* have been considerably modified by recent decrees of the Diet; and so late as 1839 a most important concession was made by the magnates and proprietors, as regards the treatment of the peasant, whose condition, preceding the recent abolition of the privileges of the nobles, may be summed up thus:—The *Corvée*, meaning certain services (in the language of the country *robott*, or labour), are exacted from the peasant for the holding which he sometimes partially, and sometimes wholly, cultivates. These holdings are called *Sessions*, and there are about 400,000 copyhold sessions in Hungary. Many of the peasants occupy a whole session, others a half, a quarter, or a fourth; each paying services according to the extent of his holding. The holder of a whole session has attached to his dwelling one *joch* of land (nearly one and a half English acres); and, at least sixteen *joch*—in some counties they have as much as fifty—of arable, and from six to twenty *tagwerk* of meadow-

land ; in addition to which the peasant had the right of pasturage on the common, which, in some instances, was of a profitable nature ; and, where there were forests, he was also allowed the necessary wood for firing, and for building purposes. In return for these concessions, he gave the lord fifty-two days of labour with a team, or one hundred and four days of hand-labour ; he also frequently gave one-ninth of his produce, whether in the shape of fruits or cattle ; and for his house, or tenement, he paid a quit-rent of one florin. These were the payments of the peasant to his lord, whose land he tilled.

Besides these dues, he had to pay to the Catholic clergy a tithe, which, however, being generally farmed by the county, or by the lord, was not very heavy. Then there were the direct taxes, which the peasant had to bear, in conjunction with the Free Boroughs : but, for the whole kingdom, these taxes seldom exceeded four millions of florins, or about £400,000. But the peasant found a far heavier burden in the *Cassa Domestica*, or the local taxes, upon which the expenses of the county magistrates, the police officers, the prisons, the building of bridges and repairing of roads, were charged ; while the nobles were exempt from

payment to any of these burdens, although, within the last few years, the latter have defrayed the expense of similar public works, by private subscriptions. The military, also, were quartered upon the peasant exclusively, which, in addition to his other burthens, he found exceedingly difficult to bear, for he was compelled to furnish the soldier with provender and food, at almost nominal prices.

The peasant had, likewise, to give so many days' labour, when required either to make or repair the roads, and was compelled to furnish horses to the traveller, when armed with an *Assignation*, which frequently entailed upon him considerable loss. The Hungarian peasant, strictly speaking, was not *adstricti glebæ*, like the serf in Russia, for he could quit his holding when he pleased, provided due notice were given to his lord, of his intention to that effect.

The stick could not latterly be used to force the peasant to perform his work during *Robott*; the act of 1835, of the Diet, effected that amelioration. The *Robott* labour, in general, was performed in a very slovenly manner, as may readily be inferred; and if a hired labourer exhibited a degree of sloth in his movements, it was usual to reproach

him with the remark, "that he worked as though he were in *Robott*." The proprietors, for the most part, would have been glad to commute this slothful, and comparatively unproductive labour, for a money payment; but the peasant had a great repugnance to part with his money, considering the use of his horses, and his own hands, as less valuable payment than a bit of coin or a bank-note. Formerly the peasant could be ejected from his holding at the will of the lord; but, since 1836, sufficient reasons were demanded for such an act, and judged openly by the authorities; it was also necessary to prove that the peasant had neglected his tillage, and thereby injured his holding, before the ejectment could be effected. The Lord of the soil, could, moreover, formerly eject a peasant from his holding, when the latter had considerably improved it by cultivation, and give him in lieu thereof, a fresh piece of ground; which, in too many instances, underwent the same transfer; but that oppressive custom has been some time abolished; and the peasant was confirmed in his occupancy to such an extent, that he had the power of selling the use of the soil, though not the soil itself, which might be considered as a *virtual* property in it.

In the latter respect, the peasant might be compared to the occupier in Ireland, where the tenant-right prevails, although, strictly speaking, there was great diversity in the two conditions of tenure. Up to the year 1843, the peasant could not legally acquire *real* property, or hold freehold land, unless he happened, which was rarely the case, to accumulate sufficient means to become ennobled, which alone enabled him to enjoy such a privilege; nevertheless, he could attain to the position of a clergyman, an advocate, or a physician, where he enjoyed the personal, though not the political, privileges of the noble, for there were no distinctions in Hungarian society between the well-educated noble, and the well-educated non-noble, which, in some degree, attached the unprivileged to the privileged classes.

The peasants of each village elected from their own body their judge, (called a *biró*) who exercised a kind of police over them, and settled their several disputes; but, beyond this limited self-rule, they were entirely governed by the privileged class. The peasant had no power to carry on a process of law in his own name, either against his Lord, or his own equal, but was compelled to go into one of the *Sedes Dominalis*, where, until 1836, the lord pre-

sided to administer justice, who was merely checked by certain county magistrates; the latter, for the most part, being completely under his influence. In a political sense, the peasant might be considered a mere nullity, for he had no vote in the county assemblies, which determined the amount of local taxes he had to pay, and the quantity of labour he must expend in making or repairing roads; neither had he a voice in electing members to the Diet, who made the laws which he was compelled to obey.

The necessity of alleviating the condition of the peasants had long been urged upon the Diet by the Austrian government, and also acknowledged by a portion of the more enlightened and humane of the Hungarian* nobility; but the majority of the

* Great credit is due to Count Festetis, who, in the early part of the present century, made an experiment upon a somewhat extensive scale, of peasant-emancipation in the Makös, a country between the ahr and the Drave. The Count granted lands to certain peasants at fixed annual rents; a few only remaining on the common tenure of service. Those free village-cultivators soon ameliorated their condition upon their new tenures, and in a comparatively short period after holding them, they likewise improved in morals, and increased in numbers; so much so, that the colony rose from fifty to five hundred families in the space of a few years.

privileged class generally opposed that line of policy, for reasons which will shortly be stated at length. The act of 1835 was a measure in the right direction, but it did not go far enough in some of its provisions, while in others, it went too far. By the edict of 1836, the peasant and the lord had both a property in the holding, but the *Robott* was retained, although the means to enforce it were totally ineffective. As the peasant had exclusively benefitted by the latter enactment, he secretly cherished the hope, that the day was not far distant when he would be released from all his feudal burdens, and that the land which he held in subjection to another, would become his own property. It was this feeling in the peasant's mind that formed so strong a lever for the popular party to act upon, during the recent disturbances, and which enabled the latter to enlist so many adherents on their side. The peasant was promised emancipation from his feudal condition, and he had the cupidity and weakness to rely upon the promise, although it has plunged him, unfortunately, into a worse state than that which he seemed to deplore. Many of the unprivileged class held no land whatever. The *Cottar*, for example, who had only his house, gave eighteen days of

hand-labour for its yearly possession ; and a peasant who chanced to be upon an estate, where house-room was found him, gave twelve days in lieu thereof. Yet, with all these drawbacks, the Magyar peasant was tolerably well off, having plenty of food—for bread, bacon, and even beef, were in comparative abundance, besides the wine and tobacco which he cultivated to a considerable extent ; and, had he observed a little more prudence in his habits, his condition, relatively to similar classes in Europe, would have been almost enviable.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN HUNGARY.

A WORD or two on the subject of religion, and the various sects among the Hungarians. The State religion of Hungary is Catholic; yet every other religion enjoys unlimited freedom of worship. The Catholic religion is embraced by almost all the magnates and the great families, by a portion of the Slovack race, and may be denominated the creed of rather better than half the population. The Ruthenes and the Wallachians are attached to the Greek Church, the Germans, and a portion of the Slovacks, to the Lutheran; while the Magyar*

* These distinctions require certain qualifications. For instance, several of the leading Magyar families are Protestant—the

is, generally speaking, of the Calvinistic form of worship, the ascetic creed of Calvin seeming more congenial, than that of the Greek or Romish church, to the gloomy austerity of the Magyar. The State Church has experienced little change, and may be considered rich in its worldly possessions; yet the tithes are not oppressive, nor vexatious in their mode of being collected, as the Church holds a large portion of landed property in its own hands. The revenue of the Archbishop of Grau, the Primate of Hungary, is estimated about 600,000 florins annually, or £60,000. Other dignitaries of the Hungarian Church, in proportionate degrees, enjoy a revenue from £10,000 to £5,000 annually, and inferior grades in corresponding diminution*. Few of the clergy, of the

Selekés, the Rádáys, the Vays, &c., besides many of the class immediately below them. On the other hand, there are a great number of Catholic Magyars; but those who are Protestants belong almost uniformly to the Calvinistic church. There are also a considerable body of Unitarians, but they are mostly located in Transylvania. The Jews, as elsewhere, are numerous in many of the towns, and pursue their usual occupations.

* Had the Emperor Joseph succeeded in his aggressive innovations upon Hungary, there can be no question of his ulterior design to reorganize the church, and to appropriate, perchance, as he had done in other parts of the empire—Bohemia to wit—a

Catholic faith, especially, could be considered in a poor condition. The incomes of the state clergy, when viewed in relation to the value of produce in the country, must be considered of a somewhat plethoric order, although they were principally derived from real property, which is not so offensive and irritating to the cultivator of the soil as the ordinary tithe-imposts, as regards collection.

The bishop received his tithes from the peasants of all denominations, (the nobles paid no tithes), but generally a composition was made with the counties by the Estates, who levied a sum for the purpose, when the general local taxes were agreed upon. The Protestants complained of paying tithes to a creed with which they had no sympathy, although the amount levied upon them was not great. The Greek Church preserved its own ritual, but acknowledged the authority of the Council of Florence. The clergy of the latter Church are allowed to marry, and enjoy the same political privileges as the Catholics, their prelates,

portion of the revenues to secular purposes. But his sacriligious hand was arrested, and the church, like many other Hungarian institutions, was left in all her pristine and luxuriant deformity.

since 1792, being entitled to a seat in the Upper House of the Diet. The Protestants enjoy, as already remarked, the free and full exercise of their religious worship, which was conferred by treaty in 1606 and 1645, and confirmed in 1791.

The Protestant pastors are elected from among themselves in their synods, and their spiritual functions are regulated by their own hierarchy, according to certain self-imposed laws. These pastors are generally supported by voluntary contributions from the great body of the laity, and specific sums are also set apart for educational purposes, which are by no means of a scant or limited nature. The Lutheran Church has a lay Inspector-General, also elected among themselves, who represents the general Lutheran Church; and among this body of Christians, the parish priest is elected for life, while among the Calvinists, he is elected for three years only. The Protestants complain, not only of the payments of tithes to a hostile creed, but also of the Catholic Church insisting upon having the children of mixed marriages educated in the Catholic faith, besides other grievances of a more harassing nature, espe-

cially as regards converts from the Catholic to the Protestant faith. The King was the head of the State Church, and, also, in a great measure, of all the Protestant churches, by the power which the *jus supremæ inspectionis* placed in his hands.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HUNGARIAN DIET, OR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THE Diet, or Legislative Assembly of the Hungarians comprised the different states of the kingdom, which were represented by the prelates, the magnates, the simple nobles, and the royal boroughs. In the sixteenth century that legislative body was divided into two parts, but the division was rather nominal than real, for the Hungarians never acknowledged it as *un fait accompli*, as their several disputes upon a double House of Representation clearly proves. Suffice it to state the general custom of the Hungarians, as regards their legislative proceedings. In the Upper House, or *Table*, the prelates, the magnates, and a few ex-officio

dignitaries—the twelve Barons of the kingdom, and the Lords-Lieutenant of the counties—had seats. The magnates had, also, the privilege of being represented in the Lower House by proxies, to whom was accorded the right of speaking, but not that of voting, which materially complicated the political proceedings of both houses.

The duty of proxy generally devolved upon some young advocate, or the scion of a noble house; the parliamentary training of both the privileged and unprivileged being equally important—the one to acquire property, and the other to protect property already acquired. Most of the leading parliamentary Hungarians passed through this ordeal, and acquired their legislative knowledge, by appearing in the Diet as proxies for their wealthier countrymen; and there were few who attained to eminence as legislators, or even as speakers, who had not been schooled as semi-legislative dummies in the outset of their career. The sons of magnates were also entitled to the same privilege; but, whether proxies or no, they were not entitled to vote, however frequently they might exercise their right of speaking. The Palatine presided in the Upper House, by constitutional

right, as representative of the King. A magnate could also be elected by a county to the Lower House, and had the privilege of taking his seat in that branch of the Diet, if he accepted the delegated trust.

The Lower House comprised the deputies who were elected in the County Assemblies, or *Congregations*. Two members were returned from each county, or rather *delegated*, for they had no power to deviate from the instructions of their constituents; but if they ventured to exercise such a power, they were instantly recalled, either one or both. The two deputies had but one vote between them, which, properly speaking, ought to be designated as the vote of the *Congregations*. The Free Boroughs also sent their representatives to the Diet, but they had only one vote for their whole number (forty-nine), therefore they were virtually disfranchised; yet, by a fiction of law, each borough *in corpore* was considered equal to one noble, so that their restricted political power was the constant cause of squabbling between them and the privileged order. The Free Burghers appealed to precedent and equity in justification of their claims for equal political rights; but their

opponents were deaf to such appeals, and kept them in complete subjection, as regards Dietal rights and duties.

The *Estates*, or *Congregations*, were occasionally presided over by the *Obergespann*, or *Administrator* (whose constitutional legality was frequently disputed by the radical party) but generally by the *Vicegespann*, a more efficient functionary, whose duties were strikingly analogous to those of the High Sheriff in England, although of a much more extended nature. Under the Presidency of one or other of these functionaries, the Local Assemblies proceeded to business, when the most important matters were submitted to their consideration, and upon which it was necessary for them to decide.

It was in these local meetings that the Royal rescripts were read and discussed, both freely and openly, as well as the acts of the Diet; and, in the event of the former being approved of, they were immediately published and considered as law: but there was no power in the County Meetings to rescind an act of the Diet, although they sometimes exercised that power upon the rescripts of the sovereign. It was there, also, that the representations to be laid before the

king were considered, the amount and division of the taxes to be paid by the peasant-class, the police regulations, and the local improvements—such as mending or constructing of roads, bridges, &c.—the petitions from the Communes, or from private individuals, were likewise considered by the assemblies, and adjudicated upon. In addition to these onerous duties, the Local Assemblies frequently regulated the price of the necessities of life, by fixing the amount of tax which should be paid upon bread and meat : they also fixed the wages of carpenters, reapers, masons, and other labourers, besides deciding other important matters, of a local nature, which were brought under their supervising intelligence. These local communities were exceedingly jealous of what they considered as their constitutional rights, and guarded strictly against their being trenched upon by the central power.

The debates in these provincial *congregations* were sometimes exceedingly stormy, as the Hungarians are noted for public speaking, a quality which has been fostered and nourished by the free nature of their institutions, and which they have jealously and scrupulously cultivated. At the elections for the members to the Lower House of

the Diet, as well as those of the county magistrates, which took place every three years, the democratic virulence of popular assemblies was thoroughly evoked, although none but nobles were entitled to vote ; the Hungarians, on these occasions, rivalling the scenes and *saturnalia* of the worst borough elections in England. Bribery, drinking, fighting, and intriguing, were generally brought into immediate requisition, and the most strenuous efforts were made by the respective partizans of the candidate to secure his return. Votes could be given by proxy, and a poll demanded by one of the candidates, was immediately granted, and not deferred to a future day, as it is in England.

Public opinion in Hungary may, therefore, be said to have exercised an almost unlimited influence in political affairs, so numerous were the votaries for distinction. Several writers and speakers in England, who have not sufficiently studied the political institutions of Hungary, are frequently comparing* them with those of this country ; but a

* A pamphlet of great pretensions, and of the most elaborate dulness, entitled, *Parallels between the Constitution and Constitutional History of England and Hungary*, contains some of the clumsiest specimens of the art of making facts subservient to

more minute investigation of the subject will clearly establish considerable disparity between them. There was certainly a resemblance in form, to a limited degree: the Hungarians had two houses of legislature—one elective, one hereditary; but here the resemblance ceased between the Diet and the Parliament of England. Then, again, as regards the kingly power: in England it is dependant, in a great measure, upon the two Houses of Parliament, for a branch of the latter keeps the purse-strings in its own hands; while in Hungary, on the contrary, the Crown was comparatively independent of the Diet, and not put *hors de combat*

a preconceived theory, that can possibly be conceived. The writer is so little acquainted with Hungary and its institutions, and has so strangely misrepresented the little that he does know, that we should scarcely have thought his ill-conditioned production worthy of notice, had not the accomplished pen of the *Examiner* given it a prominence and importance that it little deserves. The writer in the *Examiner* must have been pressed somewhat hardly for matter whereon to expend the *furor* of his *Magyar-Mania* when he took up the crude and ill-digested *Parallels* to assist him; and he must, moreover, have been more than ordinarily blinded with his unfortunate disease, or he would not have characterized such a production as “learned, lucid, and seasonable, at a time when so much ignorance prevails on the subject of Hungary.” Heaven save the mark!

whenever the supplies were not forthcoming, for it had its own regalia, besides other estates, which were as productive, relatively, as the allowance annually made to the sovereign in England. "There is a river in Monmouth and another in Macedon," and there are two houses of parliament in England, and were also two in Hungary; to this extent, I apprehend, the resemblance was clear enough between the two legislatures; but, if we proceed many steps beyond that simply starting-point, the divergence immediately manifests itself, and continues to augment throughout their respective courses of political legislation.

A brief summary of the proceedings of the Diet, in its legislative capacity, will throw some little light upon the general relations of Hungary to Austria, and may tend to elucidate several points which appear somewhat enigmatical, when considering the causes which more immediately produced the recent calamitous conflict. I have already remarked that the division of the Diet into two bodies, only came into general use since the sixteenth century, and has constantly been the source of disputes among the various parties who compose the Hungarian political body. Preceding 1825, whenever the two

branches were in disagreement upon any question, a conference was proposed, and if the disagreement did not cease at that stage, both houses met in full assembly, and the difference between them was then adjusted *in corpore pleno*. The number of the whole Diet ranges from six to seven hundred members, including both Houses. The Lower House consists of one hundred county delegates, about the same number from the free towns, four from the two privileged districts, thirty to forty from Chapters, and about twenty members of the two High Courts of Justice;—the latter, up to 1830, being closed during the sitting of the Diet, to enable the members to attend. The general attendance to the Diet was almost equal to its whole number, so deep an interest did the Hungarians take in political matters, especially as regards the internal administration of their country.

Among the standing grievances, or *gravamina*, as the Hungarians phrase it, which were almost perpetually brought on the *tapis*, was the manner in which the votes ought to be given in the Diet. No end of disputes and debates took place on this knotty question, and there was more in the question than is apt to meet the eye of a comparative

stranger; for no direct voting was observed in the Diet until 1825, which rendered its proceedings somewhat irregular and obscure.

The right of voting was for years a fruitful source of contention between the various members of that body, although the act of 1608 states explicitly, that the delegates of Chapters and of towns, as well as the proxies of Magnates, should have both seats and votes; nevertheless, that act was frittered away by the county delegates, who would not permit the proxies to have votes, nor many of the Chapters to send delegates to the Diet. The stock-argument used by the county delegate was, that he himself represented all the nobility of the county, therefore his vote ought to have much greater weight than that of a delegate of a Chapter, or free town, which was only equal to one noble (a free town, *in corpore*, by the Constitution was equal to one noble). Again, it was alleged that the county delegate was the only member of the Diet who was fairly elected, the delegate of a free town being elected by a close body—the *Outer Council*, as they were named—which was nothing better than a self-elected body; and, also, that many of the towns had dwindled away from their once flourishing state, and had become like those consigned to schedule A and B, in England,

during the memorable Reform crisis, but with this especial difference, that instead of being the property of families, the shrunken free towns were all under the immediate influence of the Crown. The county delegates, therefore, insisted that until the Hungarian rotten boroughs, as they assumed, were struck out, and the remaining corporations were reconstituted upon a healthier basis, the delegates of the latter should be deprived of the right of voting, which, though guaranteed by law, they in fact had long ceased to exercise.

The Diet was summoned by royal writs, and the propositions to be laid before that body by the Government, were, up to 1847, generally stated in vague and indefinite terms, in order that the local *Congregations* might submit them to a previous discussion, and furnish their delegates with the necessary instructions how to vote. The *Congregations* most thoroughly ventilated the questions submitted to them ; the *cacoethes loquendi* being by no means a *minus* quantity in the Hungarian mind. The Diet, when it voted the subsidies, generally accompanied the vote with a peculiar condition—that such subsidies should be considered as a free gift (*libera oblatio*), and not as a recognized impost. The functions of that body were, first, to discuss

the royal propositions, and the grievances (*gravamina*) of the country; secondly, to grant supplies, or rather to fix the amount of taxes which were to be raised from the peasant-class, and to vote subsidies from the nobles. In the Diet of 1790, it was enacted that the supplies for the standing army should only be granted from one sitting to another—similar to the English enlistment act, which is passed annually by the House of Commons—that is, for three years, the period intervening between one Diet and another, when legally convened. Thirdly, the Diet had the exclusive power to decree a *General Insurrection*, to propose the *Diploma Coronationale*, or the promise of the King to preserve the Constitution inviolate; to elect the Palatine, and the two Crown Keepers; and, lastly, to confer naturalization upon foreigners.

At the commencement of the dietal proceedings, a committee was invariably appointed to draw up the *gravamina*, or grievances, which the country complained of, and which were gathered from the instructions sent to their delegates by the different *Congregations*. A delegate had the privilege of introducing any measure to the Diet, which his constituents thought advantageous to their interests, where it was generally discussed in the most earnest,

if not in the most temperate manner ; and either rejected or adopted, according to its intrinsic merits, or its local importance. The delegates to the Diet received a remuneration from their constituents, proportionate to the expense of living at the period when they were discharging their legislative duties, and each delegate was allowed a secretary or amanuensis, who was also paid out of the public purse. Many reforms were effected under the mild and judicious sway of Maria Theresa by the Diet, among which may be mentioned the amelioration of the peasants, whose burdens were materially diminished by the enactments of the *Urbarium*, which paved the way for a complete change in the relative position of the privileged and the unprivileged classes of the kingdom ; and had the same policy been observed by her successor, the Hungarians would have gradually emerged from the feudal cloud which has so long obscured them, and which has generated so many storms in their political atmosphere. Under the dominion of that enlightened Queen, village schools were also established, besides other measures of a beneficial tendency ; but on the accession of Joseph II. in 1780, to the throne of Austria, this wise and conciliatory connection between the two kingdoms was

almost entirely changed. It is necessary to keep this point of history steadily in view, as it may be termed the *pivot* upon which the affairs of Hungary have turned, and to which her evil genius has unfortunately given a wrong direction. Joseph was a strange compound of *theoretic* knowledge and *practical* ignorance, and had a singular capacity for putting *right* things in *wrong* places; his rash and *fittless* innovations, as regards Hungary, furnish a memorable example of the truth of the old adage, that it is much easier to make the garment fit the body, than the body the garment. You may cut your cloth according to the hump of deformity, which occasionally appears on the human frame; but you would find it no easy matter to level down the hump to the ram-rod straightness of a well-cut coat. Yet Joseph attempted something analogous to this kind of action in his policy towards Hungary; he was struck with the *système central* of *absolutism*, which was then just dawning on the minds of the political propagandists of the day, and for certain purposes of state, which are commendable enough when they are found practicable, he was determined to reduce that system into the whole of the empire. The Hungarians strongly opposed the new-fangled policy of the Emperor, as it was natural they

would, for of all the people in Europe, certainly they were the least likely to forego their unrestrained freedom of political action, in order to submit to the uniform, constrained, and mechanical levelling, which centralization implicitly demands. Joseph succeeded to the kingdom of Hungary, by virtue of a compact made by his great grandfather, Leopold II. with the representatives of the nation in 1687, when the throne was made hereditary in the House of Hapsburg, on the express condition, however, that each successor to the throne should be legally crowned by the Diet,* and solemnly pledge himself to rule according to the fundamental laws of the Constitution. As Joseph contemplated violating the Constitution, and transforming Hungary into nothing more than an Austrian province, he could not decently make

* The ninth article of the first part of the *Tripartitum* speaking of the privileges of nobility, says, "that a noble is only subordinate to the authority of his legally-crowned King." The constitutional *formula*, or oath, as it is commonly called, upon which so much stress has been laid, is, therefore, a privilege of nobility, rather than a political right for the advantage and security of the many, in the true democratic sense of the term, and naturally lost its vigour when the aristocratic form of the constitution was destroyed by the radical party, and the general rights of the people were acknowledged.

such a declaration, therefore he neglected to convoke a Diet, and instead of being crowned, caused the diadem of St. Stephen to be carried to Vienna, to show that he considered his claim to the throne to be based simply upon hereditary right, and not upon constitutional enactments.

In unison with this arbitrary feeling he suppressed the county meetings by a simple edict; and, on the pretext that great abuses existed in the local institutions, he converted the fifty-two counties into ten provinces, and nominated a privy councillor to preside over each, with the title of *Administrator*. This abrupt and brusque innovation upon the established institutions of Hungary, naturally awakened a strong prejudice against the imperial government, and evoked a determined opposition to all its measures, whether they were of a beneficial tendency or no. The Hungarians made a dead stand against the policy of Joseph, and rejected all his measures with the most dogged pertinacity; therefore his edicts for religious toleration, his plans for the emancipation of the peasant class, and for equalizing the taxation, however excellent in themselves, were viewed with an eye of distrust, and considered as part of a settled scheme to render Hungary a mere tributary to Austria. At length, an insurrection was on the point of

breaking out, but the approaching death of Joseph prevented it; and the last act of his political life was to sign the memorable* *Revocation*, which annulled all his measures as King of Hungary, except the *Toleration* Edict, and the *Urbarian* regulations.

The act of *Revocation* was considered by the Hungarians as a great triumph over the government of Austria, and was celebrated with every demonstration of victory. A diet was immediately convoked at Presburg, the first that had assembled for twenty-five years; and the deputies, dreading a repetition of innovations from Austria, commenced their proceedings by declaring Hungary an independent kingdom, solemnly affirmed that they would acknowledge no authority but that of a *legally* crowned sovereign, and resolved that a Diet should be summoned every three years, and oftener if required. The Diet, however, confirmed the *Toleration* Act, although they only recognised the *Urbarium* as a provisional law. The anti-Austrian feeling, or the apprehension of being *Germanized*, as the Hungarians termed it, caused the Diet of 1806 to propose a series of measures, some of which were passed into

* *Revocatio Ordinationum qua sensu communi legibus, &c. &c.*

laws, to guard their institutions against its influence. An edict was promulgated that the Magyar language should be taught as the principal language in all the high schools of the kingdom, and that professors should be appointed expressly for that purpose; and in the same Diet it was enacted that certain departments of the administration should make use of either the Latin or the Magyar, at the option of the parties with whom they corresponded. It was also decreed that the representations of the county congregations to the King should be drawn up in two columns, one in Latin and the other in Magyar, which kept alive the embers of ill-will, that had been so unfortunately heated by the wayward policy of Joseph.

From 1813 to 1825 there was no Diet summoned, and the Hungarians complain, and with reason too, at this suspension of their constitutional rights; and the only defence advanced of a tangible nature in favour of the Imperial government, was the disturbed state of the Continent, and the demand for constitutional forms of government by communities who were not prepared for them, and who moreover had the weakness to suppose that institutions can be *improvised*, instead of being evolved by slow decrees, and from properly constituted elements.

At length the revolutionary outbursts of Spain and Italy were suppressed, when Austria had breathing time allowed to resume the usual placid course of her policy; and, as the storm had broken off somewhat hurtlessly, the Imperial Government convoked another Diet in Hungary, whose proceedings, as will shortly be seen, were as characteristic as those of its predecessors.

The opposition complained of the arbitrary conduct of the *Austrian* authorities, in levying troops and raising taxes without the consent of the Diet, and in spite of the repeated remonstrances of the county congregations; but the most serious complaint against the Imperial authorities was, that they had dissolved some of the local assemblies by an armed force, and had placed several of the Magyars under arrest. This complaint, in some measure, was well-founded, and the Austrian government should have refrained from committing so grave a mistake as to place themselves in a false position as regards constitutional punctilios, especially with so touchy a people as the Hungarians; and had not the policy of one, whose motives and meaning were generally right, however wrongly they were sometimes attempted to be realized, prevailed, the Diet would have had no provocation to stimulate its somewhat hasty disposition, and the

mutual advantage of ruler and ruled would, according to all reasonable calculation, have been amply secured. But, unfortunately, it was destined to be otherwise. The Diet renewed the old question of languages, whose tendency could only keep alive the animosity which had too long prevailed; and an edict was passed, by a large majority, to authorize the foundation of an Hungarian academy, or society, for the cultivation and encouragement of the Magyar language and literature.

The institution was to be reared and supported by voluntary contributions, in order to give greater popular effect to the intentions of its founders; and money and books, according to the statements of the period, rapidly poured in from all quarters. The Count Szechenyi, with his characteristic forwardness, gave £6000 towards the institution; or, as he phrased the donation, "one whole year's income." The Prince Philip Bathiany is represented to have given £5000, and Count G. Kardy, £4000, besides other individual thousands, whose donors are not mentioned in the account of the transaction.

As it was natural to expect, if, indeed, it were not the immediate aim of its founders, this academy became the instrument of fostering political prejudices, and of fanning the dying flames of national enmity

against the Imperial *régime*. The University of Pesth was known to be one of the most richly endowed institutions, for educational purposes, in Europe; and, apart from the apathy which will occasionally creep over the best-founded, and most wisely-conducted establishments, it may challenge a comparison with others of a similar nature, as regards the value of its services to the community, amongst which it rears its proud and learned head. Again, there are several endowed colleges and seminaries in other parts of Hungary; at Presburg, at Kashau, at Gross Wardein, at Eslau, Raab and Agram for Catholics; at Kesmark for Lutherans; at Debreczin, Patak, and Papa for Lutherans; and at Carlowitz for the Greeks; besides the mining schools and the private establishments of the Archduke at Altenburg, and of Count Festetis at Kesthely, the instruction at which, however, is more particularly confined to agriculture.

The politico-educational animus continued to increase, so much so, that a delegate from the county of Szabolts proposed in the Diet, according to the instructions which he had received from his constituents, that a sum of £100,000 should be appropriated to the following purposes: namely, that £20,000 should be devoted to the cultivation of the Magyar

language £40,000 for national (Magyar) schools, and £40,000 for the construction of a Magyar theatre. This proposition was not rejected ; but was left over for future consideration, after being well received, and discussed with the keenest animadversion, as regards its political tendency. The same Diet declared that any one ignorant of the Magyar language should be incapable of filling a public appointment ; and in the Diet of 1837, which was animated with the same spirit, it was enacted that all the laws of Hungary should in future be framed in the Magyar language, then translated into Latin, and, if any doubt should arise as to their meaning, the Magyar, and not the Latin, text should be considered authoritative. The same edict further declared, that law-suits might be pleaded in the *Curia Regiæ*, either in the Latin or in the Magyar tongue, according to the will of the parties, but that the verdict should always be rendered in the latter language.

I simply dwell upon these apparent trifles in the political proceedings of the Hungarians, because they clearly indicate the current of national feeling, and show the difficulty of dealing with so wayward a disposition—a disposition which indulged so largely in comparative non-essentials, and whose trifling and intangible nature evinced a determina-

tion to be displeased under almost every condition of circumstances. Nevertheless, this species of solemn trifling has not been wholly innocuous to the Hungarians themselves, however inopportune it may have proved to the Austrian government; for the attempt to establish the Magyar influence as supreme in Hungary, raised a feeling of opposition in other sections of the community, proportioned to the arrogance of the assumption. The Slovack, the Wallachian, and the Ruthenian portion of the Hungarian people, were naturally incensed at the Magyars in making their language the exclusive dialect of the constitution, and conceived themselves relatively lowered in the social scale; the more especially as the Magyars arrogated to their class a supremacy, not on the score of numbers, or social and political worth, but simply and exclusively on the ground of wealth and station. The Slovacks were the first to express their opposition to the Magyars; and through the influence of their spiritual guides, who felt themselves more particularly aggrieved than their lay brethren, from being deprived of certain advantages by Magyar exclusiveness, they were soon converted into political opponents. In other terms, the arrogant assumption of the Magyar part of the Hungarians threw

the greater portion of the Slavonian population into the ranks of Austria, and raised a similar feeling among the Croatians, whose sympathies, from old recollections, were easily enlisted on the side of the latter. This exclusive conduct on the part of the Magyars proved extremely hurtful, even to the cause which they specially espoused, as it divided Hungary into two distinct camps—both waging, as it were, an internecine war—whose watchwords were *Magyarism* on the one hand, and *Slavonism* on the other. The Austrian government, finding the country thus divided in opinions and sympathies, was forced to shape its policy accordingly, and governed on the maxim of *dividè et impera*, although it had no hand in the *dividè*-portion of the policy, whatever malignant opponents may say to the country, just as England did Ireland for a series of years, but with this difference—England relied upon the small and influential *few*, while Austria, on the contrary, uniformly endeavoured to support the *many* against the *few*. Hence, in some measure, the Magyar outcry against Austria, for these last ten years especially; and hence, also, the preference of the Croatians for the Austrian, to the real Hungarian supremacy, as shown in the recent disturbances.

To resume the thread of the Dietal proceed-

ings. In the year 1830, on the opening of the Diet, a long list of what was denominated *preferential grievances*—from being preferred or presented in 1812 and 1825, and therefore considered as stock-materials for parliamentary opposition—were brought before the attention of the Assembly, and discussed with all the gravity and importance, in which the Hungarians are masterly adepts, of first-rate national grievances. These *preferential gravamina* were thirteen in number, and were drawn up in the form of requests. The first was, that Dalmatia and the Adriatic isles should be incorporated with Hungary, which, if granted, would have still further embittered the Slavonians against the Magyars; the second, that the counties of Middle Szolnok, Krasnőe, and Zavanel, in the district of Kövar, should be detached from Transylvania, the third, that a more intimate union of Hungary and Transylvania should be effected; the fourth, that Gallicia and Lodomeria should be united with the kingdom; the ninth, that the Hungarian treasury should be rendered completely independent of the Imperial Treasury of Vienna; the eleventh, that the cultivation and propagation of the Magyar language should be encouraged in every possible way; the twelfth, that his Ma-

esty should make grants of crown lands, and not look to the highest bidder alone, but to personal merit especially; and the thirteenth, merely setting forth that the acts of 1691 and 1805, were not sufficient guarantees against anonymous informers (Austrian spies), and, therefore, requests that more stringent measures should be taken to eradicate the evil. The Imperial Government complied with the eleventh, as regards the Magyar language, and the second, which requested the incorporation of certain counties; but to the others there was no reply, except the twelfth, which was conveyed in rather laconic, yet reproving terms. Namely, that it was for the Emperor to decide upon the disposition of crown lands, and that his Majesty always endeavoured to be guided, in such matters, by the claims of merit alone.

In the Diet of 1836, several important measures were suggested by the Austrian Government for the internal amelioration of Hungary, and among the foremost was the condition of the peasant-class. Certain committees, in the preceding Diets, had been formed for specially considering the Urbarial laws, and their bearing upon the peasant; and the committee of 1837 was appointed to examine the reports of its predecessors, with the view of effecting

the changes required. In the royal propositions, the Diet was earnestly recommended to ameliorate the condition of the labouring-class, and to fix the relations between the lord of the soil and the occupant, upon such a basis as would be conducive to the welfare of both. The Lower House seemed disposed to make further concessions than were approved of by the Magnates; the former wishing to empower the peasants to dispose of their sessions and the usufruct thereof, in whatever way the latter might consider beneficial to themselves. Besides this important proposition on the part of the Diet, two other resolutions were passed, which, in their bearing, might have proved highly advantageous to the interests of Hungary, especially one of them, had it been followed up with energy and spirit. The first resolution was a request to the King, in the usual form, to convoke all future Diets in Pesth, instead of Presburg, and so strongly was the request supported in both houses of the Diet, that his Majesty promised compliance upon certain conditions, which were, however, never complied with, therefore the matter was left in abeyance.

The second was of infinitely greater importance:—an act was passed, enabling a Joint Stock Company to construct a bridge over the Danube,

from Buda to Pesth, and one of the clauses of the act contained a proviso, that the said Company should be enabled to levy tolls upon all persons, without distinction, who should pass over the bridge. That proviso was driving the small end of the wedge into the privileges of the noble class, which would soon have told home, had there been time for the operation to be repeated, which was evidently the aim of those who inserted it. Generally speaking, the tenour of the debates in the Diets, when quietly analysed, may be formularised in the following terms: Whenever the propositions of the government provoked a violent debate, the violence was attributed, by the opposition, to a defence of *national rights* against Austrian encroachment; while the latter, in spirit, simply aimed to augment the material prosperity of the country, by restraining repressive privileges on the one hand, and diminishing oppressive restraints on the other.

Whenever the Diet clamorously demanded liberty of the press and publication of debates—two dangerous privileges in so half-developed a community as that of Hungary—the Imperial Government quietly responded with the request, that they

should improve the administration of justice, that they should construct roads, canals, and easy communications for transporting commodities; and, above all, that they should more equitably adjust the weight of taxation, which bore unnecessarily heavy on some parts of the political body, and unjustly light upon others.

CHAPTER V.

PRESENT TENURE OF LANDS.

A WORD or two upon the question of peasant-tenure of land, which will materially illustrate the relative position of the opposing parties in the recent insurrection. The law of Austria, as regards the peasant-holder of land, has been gradually evolved from the old feudal law, which considered the peasant as *adstricti glebæ*. The peasant now holds his land *en saisine*, as the old term runs; that is, he can be punished for any non-execution of his obligations to the lord, but he cannot be ejected like an ordinary tenant.

This law has created a material change in the condition of property, and also upon the cultivator of that property, as it has compelled the proprietor

to come to an understanding with the former, which has been mutually advantageous. Land in Hungary is held on the condition of labour, (Robot), in lieu of money-rent, which cannot be raised, except in a country whose produce is consigned, or exported, to a foreign market. This kind of labour is found to be almost as unproductive as that of slave-labour, there being so little of human self-interest to act as a stimulus in either condition of the labourers, whether peasant or slave. The landlord upon this tenure is debarred from deriving a just advantage from the increase of population, in the shape of rent, for the holdings remain unchangeable in the value fixed by law.

This labour-rent prevailed in one form or another throughout the whole provinces of the empire, and is periodically regulated by the Government. In some provinces it merely amounts to a quit-rent, the peasant only giving twelve days' labour in the year, for a holding of thirty acres of land. The peasant is not bound to his holding like his predecessors on the soil; he can give it up, although it cannot be taken from him; and he can dispose of his time and property and that of his family, apart from that which he is bound to give for the use of his land.

The cheapness of provisions, from the difficulty of disposing of the accumulations of produce by means of export, keeps the peasant, generally speaking, well supplied with food, and as the lord is dependant upon his labour, the latter finds it policy to be lenient and considerate in years of pressure and necessity, by frequently foregoing the whole of his claims upon the land. It follows from this, that in a country rich in produce, a tax levied in money can only be defrayed out of the returns from foreign trade. Hence, in a great measure, the perplexing position of Hungary and Austria, which has given rise to so many misunderstandings between them, especially under Joseph II., who endeavoured to force a land-tax on that kingdom, when it was almost entirely cut off from commercial intercourse with other nations.

Poland, which took some of its wines, had lost its consuming power, with the loss of its independence; and the Turks who were, at that time almost the natural enemies of the Austrians, completely closed the eastern outlet against the Hungarians. The payment of a tax, in proportion to the fertility of the soil, was, therefore, an utter impossibility, and the resistance of the Hungarian nobles was dictated rather by stern necessity than

by factious enmity; and, in the regulation of the tariff between Austria and Hungary, which has frequently taken place within the last forty years, the principles of taxing* the productions of the latter, was unfortunately preferred to the policy of conciliation, which might have weaned the Diet to a more peaceful adjustment of the question.

The plans for the improvement of the peasant-class, which the liberal nobles were desirous of adopting, were sometimes thwarted by the govern-

* It may be alleged in favour of Austrian policy towards Hungary, that the latter has uniformly refused to submit to her proportionate share of taxation, when compared to the German and Italian portions of the empire. The Imperial Government has tried in vain to obtain anything like fair returns from the mines in the hands of private individuals in Hungary, and also from other sources of industry, which ought, upon every principle of financial equity, to contribute their quota to the treasury. The rule which Austria adopts towards Hungary, as regards the duty imposed upon the produce of the latter, when exported, and also upon articles which she imports from Austrian states for her own consumption, is—that Hungarian produce, when exported, pays one-half the duty which is levied on similar produce from foreign states; that no article of Hungarian growth is prohibited, and that, as regards manufactured goods, Hungary shall receive those of Austria in duties fixed by the crown, and shall not be allowed to import any from foreign countries, which are not importable into the Austrian states.

ment, whose policy, ostensibly, was to equalize the conditions of society, but in reality to humble the pride of the privileged class, whose resistance had been so frequently exercised against it. The nobles naturally concluded, that the slightest concession on their part, would only lead to still further aggressions on the part of their assailant, therefore came to the determination to yield at no point, and to adhere to the watch-word of *no surrender*.

This resistance on the part of the nobles naturally exposed them to the obloquy of wishing to retain the means of oppressing those beneath them; and a most unjustifiable use was, in many instances, made by their opponents to render them odious in the eyes of their fellow-citizens. The German residents in Hungary, many of whom belong to the Free Boroughs, caught the infection from their kinsmen in other parts of the empire, and looked upon themselves as abased by the pertinacious retention of the Hungarian nobles, of their privileges, and claimed to be admitted in the Diet, as regards voting, to an equality with the latter. This demand of the Free Burghers has always met with the most stubborn resistance on the part of the Magyars, from an apprehension that it would

afford the government a strong lever, which might be used against them ; hence the dead-lock, stand-still, course of proceeding, which has for so long a period characterised the Diet, and also the political intercourse of Hungary with the Imperial government.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVENTS OF 1848.

THE relative position of the Austrian Government and Hungary had, externally, but slightly changed during the decennial period between the convocation of the Diet of 1837 and that of 1847; yet, internally, there were several elements at work, which would have produced their beneficial results, had a more powerful influence prevailed. Commercial treaties had been contracted by Austria, which would have materially benefitted Hungary, by creating outlets for her rich natural productions; and railroads were projected, which must have connected her with the great net-work of European industry, and brought her into immediate proximity

with the vast *matériel* movement of the age. But the Hungarians have not been so wise in their generation as the friends of rational progress could desire; they have somewhat too busiedly occupied their minds with political obstructions, which have generated strife and dissension amongst themselves, and their neighbours also, instead of quietly adhering to the practical development of their internal resources.

A project for a Joint-Stock Company, to enable the Hungarians to dispense with imported manufactured articles—an, in every sense, absurd project—was received and applauded with every sentiment of approbation; while a proposition to unite the central parts of Hungary with the port of Trieste, was hooted down as though it had been pregnant with destruction to her best interests. Poor Szechenyi! this was in part your scheme*—

* The projected railroad would have united Hungary with the Adriatic on the one hand, and with the great lines of communication which connect Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia, with the Elbe and the northern parts of Europe, on the other; but, from an exaggerated predilection for Fiume, which was rather assumed than based upon any practical deduction of its superiority to that of Trieste, as a commercial port, the scheme was decried by the Magyars, although strenuously supported by their leading mind. In fact, the spirit of separation was mixed up with every

one of the several really practical measures which your singularly constructed mind suggested ; and had it been completed, which it will be if ever Hungary is to become a portion of the great European community, the main arteries of her internal activity—the Waag, the Muhr, and the Theiss—would have been united with the Adriatic, and the surface of the Danube would have rebuked the statesman-sage, who waywardly exclaimed, “That its noble stream ran the wrong way,” in allusion, I presume, to its choked-up bed, and its almost hermetically-sealed mouths.

The Government convoked the Diet in November, 1847, in unison with the constitutional laws of Hungary, which it had strictly observed since 1825, and submitted several important measures for its consideration. I shall enumerate the leading reforms which were proposed by the Imperial Government :—

question, whether purely material or no ; and, as a consequence, the Magyars frequently placed themselves in a most factious position. For example, when the Austrian Government shewed a disposition to support both a railway to Trieste, and one to Fiume also, the radical party in Hungary moved heaven and earth to frustrate the former scheme, although it must have been much more advantageous to the material interests of their country than the latter.

1. A new system of billeting the troops, so as to ease the peasant class.

2. A reform of the law relating to property, so as to facilitate the sale and transfer of nobles' estates.

3. A new criminal code.

4. A bill for amending the municipal laws of the counties and the towns.

5. A bill for regulating the commercial intercourse between Hungary and Austria, with a view of modifying or repealing the duties.

6. A bill for the *total enfranchisement of the peasant-lands*.

7. A bill for the improvement and construction of roads, railways, &c., which would have indirectly taxed the noble class, &c.

A pretty liberal programme this for a stand-still, do-nothing government—a government which has been assailed right and left, as perpetually conspiring against the institutions of Hungary—whose retrograde policy has been the standing theme of censure, by a certain class of political reasoners, for these last twenty years. Party spirit, however, ran high in the Diet, and the radicals, or *Kossuthites*, were gaining strength with the more noisy portion of the delegates, when the above measures

were submitted to its consideration ; the extreme party declared them not sufficiently liberal in their details, in some respects ; while in others, they were denounced as contrary to the spirit of the Constitution. Strike high, strike low, it was all the same ; nothing would please the fastidious punctilios of the Dietal Constitutionals.

But, granting even these objections of the liberal party to the measures of the government to be well founded, still there was “ ample room and verge enough ” to discuss their nature within legitimate bounds ; there was no absolute necessity to step over the threshold of legality into the wide thoroughfare of unlicensed freedom, unless a predetermined, foregone conclusion had dictated such a step. No one could say, conscientiously, that the Austrian Government had menaced the Constitution of Hungary, in the measures which it proposed to the Diet ; nor could the tendency of those measures have been construed, by a fair-dealing mind, into a hurtful direction even, much less into a destructive one, as regards the Constitution. The Constitution of Hungary, then, was not placed in jeopardy by the Austrian Government ; unless the convocation of the Diet, according to the prescribed law, the imposition of taxes in unison with Dietal

recognition, and the levying the army-supply upon the plan almost immemorially acknowledged to be the best, were jeopardizing it.

Every act of the government was strictly and guardedly within the limits of constitutional legality—the very freedom, the license, I might justifiably say—of debate in the Diet, might be adduced as a prominent proof of the former's watchfulness, in even seeming to wound the political susceptibilities of the Hungarians, and every rational difference of opinion upon the policy of the Imperial measures might, therefore, have been adjusted in a constitutional manner, had not violence and party licentiousness superseded the more rational and conservative feelings of the Diet.

When the Paris revolution burst forth, and fired the seditious train which had long been laid in Lombardy by secret emissaries, the Hungarian radical party, by way of adding fuel to the revolutionary fire, proposed in the Diet, through their leader *Kossuth*, an address to the Crown, in which they set forth the necessity of extending constitutional forms of government to all the provinces of the empire, of establishing an independent and responsible government for Hungary, real representation of the people, and the embodying of the

National Guards, &c. This address was framed, discussed, and formally voted, under the plausible plea of strengthening the Austrian empire; not formally voted, for it was carried by acclamation and without a division, in the Lower House, whilst the Upper House, terrified at the scenes of Vienna, seeming to abdicate, for the moment, their legislative functions, let it pass with almost breathless haste. By adopting this address, the link which united the two countries would have been instantly broken, for it annihilated the political power of the municipal institutions of Hungary, which could not possibly exist with a responsible parliamentary government, from the endless collision of interests that must have ensued; and the influence of the Magyar race, which was based on the ascendancy of the noble-class, must have submitted to a pulverizing process, which would have proved by no means conducive to its longevity.

It is necessary to dwell upon this step of the anarchical party, because it forms, as it were, the key-note to most of the subsequent events. The radical party, hurried on by the fiery impulse of Kossuth, and his gallery-applauding-myrmidons, committed an egregious blunder by this political move; they were the first to place themselves with-

out the pale of legitimate and constitutional authority, not only by the democratic extravagance of the address to the throne, which threatened to demolish the entire *statu quo* of political institutions, but also by the illegal means by which that address was carried. It was always considered a point of great importance by the *congregations* in Hungary, upon which I have already remarked, that their delegates should receive direct from them instructions how they were to act in the Diet ; and not even upon matters of comparative minor importance was that delegate presumed to express his individual opinion, but that of his constituents. Yet, upon a question of vital importance—one that proposed to change the whole constitution of the country, to annihilate even the privileges of these very constituencies, the deputies of the Lower house voted at once, and in the most republican off-hand manner, neither knowing, nor, apparently, caring whether the *congregations* which they represented, would approve of their conduct, after acting without the customary instructions.

The wild and revolutionary proceeding,—for it was nothing less,—alarmed the government of Austria, which, at that moment had the Italian provinces in open revolt, the capital of the empire

in the hands of a set of democratic destructives, who were revelling over the sacrifice of order, equity, and law, and its external relations in the most touchy and tender condition, and was, therefore, obliged to have recourse to temporizing means, although it kept strictly within the limits of constitutional legality, in order to neutralize, if it had not the power to prevent, the evil consequences that must naturally flow from it. The Austrian government did more than this; it placed itself in jeopardy, and with it the great mass of its subjects, for it was only the noisy and designing few who were engaged in the disturbances by the lenient policy which, at the outset, it mistakingly adopted towards the Hungarian malcontents. More prompt measures at first would have prevented, at least, the subsequent calamitous events; and, however harsh it may appear, practical experience has, at length, taught regularly established authority throughout Europe, that it is not always cruel to a community to punish a few of its disaffected members, especially when it has the effect of arresting a disease that otherwise might prove destructive to its best interests. A stitch in time, says the old proverb, will save nine; why may not this wise saw of domestic economy be applied to the metaphorical

garment of the state, as well as to the material one of individuals ?

A designing demagogue can easily deceive the thousands of discontented individuals, whose existence in a community seems inevitable, and hurry them in a direction which is not only fatal to themselves, but also to the best interests of the body which they accidentally disfigure. It is sufficiently obvious how such demagogues ought to be treated, especially when they step over the threshold of loyalty and public order !

The movement at Vienna, ostensibly directed to obtain constitutional government, was identified with that of Hungary, which was directed to abolish long-established constitutional powers ; and the sympathy of the Viennese, excited by the florid speeches of Kossuth, assumed so extravagant a form that it even threatened to storm the Imperial palace, if the demands of the Hungarians were not complied with. Those demands were conceded, or, rather, they were wrenched from the enfeebled hands of authority, and the laws of April 1848, passed at Presburg, were the natural consequence of the concession. The Hungarian radicals shrank from venturing too far in their code-concocting legislation, for fear of alarming some few of their more influ-

fluent, yet weak-headed, but not far-seeing, coadjutors, therefore preserved the semblance of an union between Hungary and Austria—they expressed the latter in principle, but most woefully weakened it in practice. The New Constitution, as it was somewhat ridiculously called, almost annihilated the power of the sovereign. In the event of his absence from Hungary, it was enacted that the Palatine should be invested with supreme power, and that he should act with perfect inviolability. The King had simply the right to nominate to the Presidency of the Council, whomsoever the Palatine might select for that post, and the latter was restricted in his choice of a ministry to the selection made by the President of the Council. In other terms, the Sovereign was completely subservient to his representative, the Palatine, who was equally subservient to the President of the Council, whom he might select, and the latter was placed in a similar position, as regards the body whose affairs he was presumed to direct. There was a simplicity certainly—a superb simplicity—in such an arrangement of sovereign power; but the question naturally suggests itself, why not dispense at once with both the king and his representative, seeing that their functions were of so ordinary and insignificant a

nature? There was, however, a point of simplicity in government-construction that even the Hungarian radicals had not attained to, comparative masters as they showed themselves to be in framing the Presburg Constitution; they ought to have proclaimed a *republic* at once, for their executive power was strikingly akin to that form of government. In the inferior portions of the executive machinery the Presburg professors showed themselves equally expert, and equally entitled to admiration. There was to be no separate army for Hungary—no separate intercourse with foreign countries was to take place: but, in order to obviate these trifling inconveniences, a Minister of War was to be created, under the name of Minister of National Defence, and a functionary, also called a minister, was to reside with the King, in order to represent Hungarian interests in the common affairs of both countries. Such are a few of the leading features of the Presburg-manufactured Constitution, about which so much fine sentiment has been sacrificed, as though it had been the perfection of human workmanship. *Ex uno*—you may imagine the details; and now that it is consigned to the limbo of forgotten absurdities—*quiescat in pace*. Would that the consequences could be as easily disposed of!

I shall now make a few observations upon Jellachich, the Ban of Croatia. The radical party in Hungary, and elsewhere, asserted, with the utmost vehemence, that Jellachich was sent into Croatia to excite civil war, in order to weaken the cause of the Hungarians. This assertion is nothing more nor less than a rank calumny, and no proof, as yet, has been furnished of its truth by the calumniators of that distinguished officer. When Jellachich entered Hungary in September, 1848, the success of his enterprise would, in all human probability, have been ensured, if he had been able to show the Hungarian officers, who asked him for the orders of the Court, a direct, or even an indirect sanction for his undertaking. But he had no orders, nor any sanction whatever, for the step which he took, therefore (as the papers asserted) he distinctly declared that he had none; nevertheless, he thought himself entitled, as he remarked to the Hungarian officers, in conformity with the spirit of the army, and of the nation of whom he was the official head, to employ the same means for the preservation of the monarchy, as others thought themselves entitled to use for its destruction. He saw that the power of the crown had been violently assailed by the revolutionary

party, therefore he acted upon his own independent sense of right, and defended it to the utmost of his powers.

In the March preceding, when the different nationalities of the Austrian empire, if the term may be allowed, expressed their opinions and desires upon political matters, the Croatsians, amongst the rest, had theirs also to express, in a similar manner. They petitioned the Emperor to be separated from the Hungarian crown, which was not granted; they also petitioned his Majesty to name Jellachich "Ban of Croatia," which was immediately acceded to, not only from the popularity which that brave soldier, and good citizen, enjoyed amongst his countrymen, but also from the steady attachment which he had shewn to the institutions of the empire. The influence of Jellachich was put into requisition to moderate the demands of the Croatsians, who had a long list of grievances to redress, in which he succeeded; so much so, that they were satisfied with certain guarantees for their national existence, and to a declaration on their part, to maintain the integrity of the Austrian empire.

It has often been remarked that the Croatsians were made the tools of the Austrian Government,

in the policy which the latter directed towards its Hungarian subjects. No remark could be more erroneous, or to use a stronger term, more pregnant with untruth. The observation has been already made, in the preceding pages, that Austria ruled her subjects according to their peculiar dispositions, and endeavoured to effect their material well-being, rather than to disturb their political idiosyncracies,—unless the latter had a tendency to interfere with their individual progress, or the general policy of the empire. Upon this principle of rule the Imperial Government quietly looked on at the semi-interneccine war, which had so long been waged between the Hungarians and the Croatians, and, whenever it was compelled to interfere, in the exercise of its general superintendence, it invariably narrowed, rather than enlarged, the ground of quarrel between them. To say, therefore, that this or that minister pitted one portion of the empire against another, simply to prevent a combination of their respective interests and feelings, under an apprehension that when combined they would be too powerful to control—too unwieldly to direct in a safe and healthy course of policy, may be perfectly fair in the arena of party polemics, but I apprehend, they would be deemed but indifferent

weapons by those who aspire to higher grounds of observation, and are completely removed from the narrow sphere of political partizanship.

The Croatians complained for years past, and with some degree of justice, of the overbearing conduct of the Hungarians—of their rude and insolent demeanour, of which they experienced so many proofs, especially in the Dietary proceedings during the recent revolt in Hungary. But the complaints were of old standing, and not easily defined, so strangely were they co-mingled with Hungarian and Austrian differences; still, the outlines were sufficiently prominent to suggest their real spirit and tendency, and may be briefly summed up thus—the Magyar's efforts to elevate himself above his Slavonian and Wallachian fellow-citizens, in regard to the Magyar language being exclusively employed as the constitutional dialect, which proceeded more from the arrogance of wealth and station, than from moral influence and numerical force, was always deemed an insult by the Croatians, the majority of whom are Slavonians. The attempt on the part of the Magyars to incorporate the Croatian districts with Hungary, which has been so frequently discussed in the Diet, totally irrespective of the wishes of the latter, and as

though they were scarcely entitled to a voice in the question, was equally offensive to the Croatians.

The Magyars have also enlisted the enmity of the Slovak clergymen against them, from an apprehension that the spiritual influence which they so justly exercise over their flocks would be greatly diminished; and more especially the Catholic priest, many of whom are the spiritual pastors of the Croatians, who suspects a proselytising tendency in the Protestant Magyar, which he naturally dreads and hates, with all the fanatical instincts of his peculiar order.

The Croatians were also taunted by the Pesth journals, under the influence of the Magyar movement, with the desire of becoming the centre of a large empire, without even the elements of attaining to a small and independent state; and since, said the latter, in spirit, if not in words, "Your inferiority in material wealth, and in cultivation, as compared to Hungary,* must always keep you in a

* The Croatians were constantly held up in the Diet, either to ridicule, or, when it suited the humour or intelligence of the speaker, to censure; and no one was more prone to stimulate the popular mind in that direction than Kossuth, who, upon a memorable occasion, vauntingly declared in the Diet of 1847,

subordinate position, you had better cease to dream of a Slavie empire, and content yourself with be-

“that he knew no Croatian; that that small space was underserving the name of a country, and that he could swallow up the whole of it for a breakfast any morning.”

In a volume of BARON PILLERSDORF, entitled *The Political Movement in Austria, during the years 1848-9*,” which may be considered as a vindication of his short political career, there is a singular confirmation of the above view of the precise grounds of quarrel between the Slavonians and the Magyars; and it becomes the more valuable from the fact that the Baron was a reluctant witness, as he deeply sympathized with the Hungarians, and, as minister, would gladly have assisted them, had their demands been based upon a just and equitable footing. “In order to secure,” says the Baron, “the success of the army in Italy, the greatest zeal was exerted in preparing equipments; and at this epoch the efforts of Hungary to detach itself from the monarchy could no longer be mistaken. . . . The resistance of the Slavonians, Germans, and Romans, (the Wallachians) in Hungary and Transylvania, against the Hungarian Government declared itself, and as, from the petitions which their deputies laid before the throne, it became evident that their most fervent wish was to take part in the Constitutional Assembly of the whole empire. The Cabinet was equally active in preventing the outbreak of a civil war in those countries, as also in soliciting the monarch to lend a willing ear to the equitable demands of the petitioners: *thus counteracting the Hungarian deputations, who were endeavouring to put a false construction on the requests of those nations.*”—(p. 100, *Austria during the years 1848-9*. Bentley).

Yet, the noble *idealist* has a remark upon the Hungarian

coming an adjunct to the Hungarian territory, when you can be protected from your *German* enemy, who only seeks to enslave you, as well as ourselves to his will." When Batthyany, Jellachich,

question that is scarcely compatible with the clear and correct view which has just been cited ; and, did it not proceed from the pen of a statesman (?) who had long sighed for the opportunity of practically demonstrating what he had theoretically conceived to be politic, and whose knowledge of the great drama of political life has been principally gleaned from the dreamy dissertations of German professors, instead of being acquired in the struggle and strife of actual existence, it might have created a feeling of surprise that a single mind could take such contradictory views of a simple question. "The same spectacle," observes the Baron, speaking of the military assault upon the capital, "was repeated in Hungary, when the neglect of conciliatory measures and a menacing invasion transformed a mere resistance into a bloody civil war, to such a degree, that, to re-establish the authority of the law and justice, it was necessary to implore foreign assistance, whilst, had conciliating steps been taken, the union would have been better consolidated." Then, why not have adopted this *conciliatory* policy when in power, and when the Hungarians, according to your own showing, Baron, were doing all they could to produce strife and discord in several important sections of the empire? The answer to this question may be deduced from the loose, slithering, and wishy-washy pamphlet which the Baron has put forth to the world, and which is valuable, however, if only as the record of a participator in the scenes of a fearful drama, which shook the very heart of a great nation, and almost accomplished its utter ruin.

Kulmer, and Pulszky, therefore, met to ascertain the differences between Hungary and Croatia, in July, 1848, there was less *naïveté* than political dissimulation on the part of Batthyany, when he innocently asked, "What were the demands and grievances of Croatia against Hungary?" But * * * *nil nisi bonum*, is the recognized canon when speaking of the dead, and especially of the *unfortunate* dead, although *nil nisi verum* is the safer one—at least with those who have the moral courage to honour the former more "in the breach than in the observance."

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the Croatian demands upon the King were, in part at least, and wholly so in form, illegal, because the policy of the Hungarian Diet of 1847, on the subject of the Croats, obtained a sort of outward legality by the sanction of the King, however revolutionary in aim and spirit that body might be; and the only excuse that can be put forward on the part of the King, who, throughout the trying scenes of the whole disturbance stood so firmly within the line of legality and order, is that he was perplexed by the advice of two ministries, the Austrian and Hungarian, both of whom assumed the right of advising him, but both, unfortunately

were at difference in the nature of their advice. Under these perplexing circumstances the King had only to choose between civil war on the one hand, if he abstained from acting at all, which, on strictly constitutional grounds he ought to have done, according to the *dicta* of the *Presburg statesmen*; or to prevent civil war, and act upon his own responsibility. The King, like a humane man, followed the latter policy, and as a matter of course, excited the indignity of the Hungarian Ministers, who let loose the cry of traitor, hypocrite, and perjurer, which ran the round of the revolutionary circles, and were received by many as truly descriptive terms, though by the discerning few, they were known to be utterly inapplicable to the head of the empire.

Here the Hungarian Ministry was decidedly wrong, for being the creature of a revolutionary movement itself, it ought to have looked with a tender eye upon other bodies, who naturally thought themselves as entitled to move, for what they conceived a redress of their political grievances, as the Hungarians themselves. But, no; the Hungarians apparently conceived that they alone had the privilege of raising the standard of revolt against their government; and simply from the fact of being partially

successful, they wished to practise towards others that which they strenuously repudiated being practised towards themselves. What is sauce for the goose, ought also to be sauce for the gander, says the homely proverb; but the Hungarians, in their political wisdom, thought otherwise, although the Croatians refused to acquiesce in the justness of their thoughts. The Croatians proved themselves, at least, a logical race, however inferior may be the standard of their moral or intellectual excellence, as compared to the Magyars.

The King made every effort to conciliate the Hungarian ministry, and in proof of the sincerity of his intentions, he even went so far as to declare publicly against the proceedings of Jellachich; and so perfect was his confidence in the fair dealing of that ministry, that he gave orders to deliver up to the Hungarians certain fortresses, and military stores, which formed subsequently the main strength of the insurrection. But all these concessions—this extended confidence—on the part of the King, was of no avail; it could not arrest, scarcely for a brief space, the onward progress of a movement whose leading principle was, that the free will of the King must be overruled by that of a revolutionary party. The Hungarian Ministry, as well as the Hungarian

Diet, proceeded on a course which justified the worst apprehensions of the King; and, instead of observing the laws, according to their just spirit and tenor,* which were the productions of their own handiwork, they twisted and distorted their meaning in so obvious a manner, that those “who ran might read” that the breaking-up of the Austrian empire must be the result, whatever might be the specific aim of those who directed them.

* As considerable misapprehension prevails regarding the *status* of the franchise in the Reform Bill of the radical party, which the Diet passed in 1847-8, it may be as well to state its precise conditions. In the pamphlet of COUNT TELEKI it is modestly stated that the mode of election established in Hungary “is not precisely universal suffrage, but is equivalent to it; while the act itself declares that the amount of property taken as the minimum of qualification, is one quarter of a session of land, or its equivalent. A session varies from twenty *joch* up to sixty or seventy, as the case may be—that is, from thirty to one hundred acres of land, and such a holding is considered by the Transylvanian Count as “equivalent to,” but not “precisely” universal suffrage. Heaven save the mark! If the Hungarians—applying the term *universal* in its general sense, and such as it is politically accepted throughout Europe—are in such an enviable condition, where was the necessity of a change? But we must not take the COUNT TELEKI, when speaking of the Hungarian franchise, in a literal sense; he had to write down to the radical class in England, therefore used the term “universal suffrage” in a figurative sense, and, for a time, it fully answered his purpose.

The Hungarian ministry endeavoured to invest the Minister, who resided with the King, with the powers of an independent Minister for Foreign Affairs; they also despatched, in July 1848, without the consent of the King, agents to foreign governments; they likewise declared that, in the event of a conflict between Austria and the Central Power of Frankfort, the former must not rely upon the support of Hungary; and Kossuth even proceeded so far in the line of treason, as to publicly declare in the Diet, that Hungary was not obliged to defend the Italian provinces of the empire, that that was merely an Austrian, and not an Hungarian, question. A law was also proposed in the Diet for a separate army, and one for an issue of paper money, without any guarantee for its convertibility; and when the King refused his assent to such sweeping propositions, the Diet, led by the radical party, directed the Ministers to carry these laws into effect without the royal assent. In one word—*a second revolution was effected.*

In the meantime, Jellachich had entered Hungary, upon the independent grounds already stated, in September 1848; and the Emperor wishing to prevent at least a civil war between troops belonging to the same army, sent Count Lamberg to

Pesth, with an order to take command of both armies. The commission of the latter, unfortunately was not signed, simply because there was no minister at Vienna to countersign it, Prince Esterhazy having, in the meantime, resigned his post. The Hungarian Diet, however, from this little circumstance, and without inquiring into the nature of it, immediately declared Count Lamberg a traitor, which so excited the mob against him, that he was butchered in cold blood. Yet this same Diet did not always stand upon the strict letter of the law, as the greater portion of its proceedings clearly testifies; nevertheless, it is fully entitled to the credit of doing so in this particular instance, *especially as it led to the murder of an innocent man!* or, as it was mildly phrased by the radical-party, that “there was simply a mistake in the form of Count Lamberg’s death.”

On this lamentable event being made known to the Emperor, he felt that his mind had received the full measure of conviction as to the real character and tendency of the Hungarian revolution; and then—and not till then—did he declare openly for Jellachich, and the course which he was pursuing. While these cruel scenes were enacting

in Hungary, the radical party at Vienna, backed by the majority of the Constitutional Assembly, which the German provinces had elected by universal suffrage, gave its formal assent to the policy of the government at Vienna, as explained by Latour; but when the news arrived from Hungary of the butchery of Lamberg, the radicals professing to sympathise with their rebellious coadjutors at Pesth, were determined that Vienna should not be outstripped in patriotism, as it was profanely termed, therefore got up an *émeute*, which ended with the murder of Latour and the departure of the Emperor.

It is painful to dwell upon such atrocious scenes; nevertheless, they ought not to be omitted in a narrative which aims at accuracy, and is penned in the strict spirit of truth.

The Hungarian rebels pretend to have beaten the Ban near Pesth, although the engagement is known to have ended without any positive result on either side, simply because they took the same direction as the latter, who was moving toward the frontier, in order to reinforce his army, after the Emperor had declared him Governor-General of Hungary. The Ban wisely took this step, the instant that he heard of the brutal death

of Lamberg. The Hungarian levies, at length crossed the frontier, and attacked the Imperial troops near Schwechat, when they were completely defeated, and would have been utterly destroyed, had not Windisgratz been obliged to continue the siege of Vienna, which purposely refused to surrender. About two months after the surrender of the latter city, Windisgratz entered Hungary with his army, when he found that it was no longer a question of local rebellion in that country, but of open and manifest civil war. He reached Pesth without the slightest resistance. The rigour of the season, however, prevented him taking advantage of his position, which materially militated against the success of his undertaking ; while, on the other hand, the Austrian Government was unable to conclude a satisfactory peace in Italy, from the unceasing intrigues of foreign powers, although the splendid operations of Radetzky had fully warranted such a conclusion, therefore the Hungarian rebels had ample scope to organize their plans of resistance, and to strengthen their influence.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SERVIANs.

THE lowest part of Hungary is inhabited by the serfs, who are a warlike, semi-civilized, and somewhat cruel people. These serfs are completely under the influence of their equally semi-civilized and, in some measure, vicious priests. The laws of April, 1848, which abolished the privileges of the nobility, the ancient county institutions of Hungary, and the influence of the noble proprietors, naturally attracted the attention of the Servians, the more especially as the Diet had proclaimed the principles of freedom and equality, and caused them to move in their own behalf, as the Croatians had already done. By a rude people

like the Servians, these principles of freedom and equality were easily misunderstood ; in addition to which they had several ancient grievances of an ecclesiastical nature, which they naturally concluded ought to be redressed by the Hungarians.

The Servian leaders stirred up the people under a variety of pretences, some of which were justifiable, while others were doubtful, and, in several instances, thoroughly without any foundation. The Servians sent a deputation to the Emperor, who directed the Hungarian Ministers to investigate their claims ; but the latter, as in the case of the Croatsians, did nothing, and left matters to settle themselves. At the same time a few Servians had committed some grievous excesses, which caused the Hungarian Ministers to delegate a special commissioner to report upon them, and also to punish the guilty ; but, instead of confining himself to the strict line of his instructions, that commissioner extended his power over all the Servian nation, and endeavoured to crush the whole movement by declaring martial law, by hanging, and by shooting. The commissioner, unquestionably, was egged on by the secret radical emissaries from Pesth, or he would not have presumed to have thus exceeded his instruc-

tions; but the Hungarian Ministry could only rely upon their agents, when the latter were engaged in some violent duties, for where discretion was required, or restraint upon the popular impulse was necessary, the latter were utterly powerless, or, at all events, refused to exercise the power, if they really possessed it.

At the same time an attack was made upon the Servian camp, near Carlowitz, when the war immediately broke out which was characterized with such brutal ferocity on both sides. Many large villages—Temevriar and Jarek, for instance—were burnt and utterly destroyed by the Servians, while the Hungarians were equally active and cruel on their side, as the destruction of the village of Futak, and the monastery of Kuvil clearly demonstrate. Under these circumstances the Servians, who were animated by national sympathy, and by the desire to gain a strong support, declared themselves for Jellachich, and joined his standard. As the war was openly declared between insurrectionary Hungary on the one hand, and Austria on the other, Jellachich no longer deemed it right to refuse the Servians, especially as they had an identity of interest with the Croatians, and were equally attached to the

Austrian empire, whose existence was in actual jeopardy, attacked as it was at that period, on all possible sides. It follows, as a natural consequence, that the Hungarians were supremely ignorant, or wilfully blind, to the real course of events, or they would have looked for an explanation of the Servian movement, not in the intrigues of the Austrian Government, but in the revolutionary example which they themselves had placed before the Servians.

The share that Colonel Maierhoffer took in the Servian movement was entirely on his own responsibility, and totally without the cognizance of the Austrian Government; and, however pertinaciously the contrary may be asserted by the radical party, no proof of a tangible nature has been produced to impugn the singleness and sincerity of his conduct. The promotion of the Colonel in the Imperial service is no proof of his having acted upon secret instructions, from the first outbreak of the war between the Servians and the Hungarians; on the contrary, it clearly proves that he took the part of those whose cause he considered just and right, and the fact of his taking, not the part of the Servians, but that of the Imperial Government, alone led to his promotion. The

Servians had already declared themselves against the Hungarians when Maierhoffer joined their ranks ; and with anarchy at Vienna and *separatism* at Pesth, the Colonel took his stand for that policy which he considered would preserve the empire from its threatened dissolution.

CHAPTER VIII.

POLITICAL RELATIONS OF THE HUNGARIANS AND THE
AUSTRIANS.

THE political relations of the Hungarians with the Austrian empire may be easily inferred, from the preceding observations upon the Hungarian Constitution, and upon the Dietal proceedings, from the first symptoms of any marked disagreement between them up to the recent rupture, which has inflicted such serious evils upon both countries. The healing hand of a mild and discriminative rule, however, will soon have the desired effect upon the Hungarians, the majority of whom were decidedly opposed to the violent and extreme position into which they were hurriedly thrown, from the conviction that the political differences

between them and the Austrian Government could have been satisfactorily arranged, had they kept within the limits of constitutional authority. The truth of these observations can be clearly established by reference to the political conduct of the Hungarians, when their party conflicts assumed a more temperate and discussional form, and the *differentia* of their opinions were stated in more moderate terms. The proceedings of the Diet since 1825 may, therefore, be read with considerable interest, as they evince no small share of political knowledge, and clearly show that that body was gradually acquiring the practical workings of a Constitutional Assembly ; and, although I may be charged with repetition, I cannot wholly refrain from adverting to them in detail.

I must premise by observing that there was in Hungary a dominant class, which principally directed its efforts to preserve its own supremacy, either through the medium of the so-called popular institutions, or by means of the most despotic authority. The Constitutional Assemblies were little better than complicated machines, which were worked for the exclusive benefit of the *few*, at the evident expense of the *many*. The imperial Government generally directed its policy to counteract the

effect of this dominating influence, being sincerely desirous to ameliorate the condition of the mass of the Hungarians, which had been so long kept in a state of comparative abjectness. The remonstrance of the Diet, when Joseph II., in 1798, decreed that every Hungarian should possess the right of acquiring property, and that the taxes, which were then exclusively borne by the peasants, should be equalized, is nearly the same in spirit, if not in words, as those which have periodically been made by that body against any similar attempt of the Austrian Government to effect the same purpose. *Mutatis mutandis*, that remonstrance might have been made in 1847, for the lapse of half a century has worked but a slight change in the relative condition of the different classes of the Hungarian people. "These differences," said the remonstrants in 1797, "constitute our privileges; they may be taken from any of us for a capital crime, but what crime have we committed? The kingdom of Hungary is as independent of Austria, as Hanover is of England; we obey no Emperor; Joseph II. is not our king; he has not taken the oaths, he has not been crowned, he is an usurper." The decree which called forth this remonstrance was revoked, as the French Revolution was just then blackening the horizon of the

political hemisphere of Germany, and brooding over the councils of the wisest and most far-seeing of European cabinets. There are one or two points, however, deserving of especial notice in the remonstrance of 1797, which have a peculiar bearing upon some recent events in Hungary, and upon which great diversity of opinion has been frequently expressed.

The friends of the revolutionary party in that country insist upon comparing the modern policy of Austria to that of Joseph II. assuming an identity of circumstances at the two periods. The common cry in the Hungarian Diet immediately before its close, which was also reiterated *ad nauseum* by the journals in the interests of the revolutionary party, was—"that the Hungarians were fighting for their ancient form of Government, and not for innovation," at the very moment that they were exerting their utmost powers to destroy that Constitution, for the laws of 1847—48, which were passed soon after with such eager haste and violence, consummated its destruction. It was by an Hungarian hand too that the fatal blow was inflicted upon the Constitution, and not by the Austrian Government; the parallel which the radical party have so inaptly instituted, therefore, fails in its

most essential point. The aggression upon the Hungarian Constitution by Joseph, originated in the wish of that monarch to establish one uniform system of centralization throughout the whole of his dominions, which, in spirit, was directly opposed to that of the local assemblies of Hungary; while the policy of the present Government of Austria was to suppress a rebellion against its authority, not arising from any violation of the Constitution on its part, but from that of the rebels themselves; the former shewing the most scrupulous regard to constitutional rights, while the latter were plunging them neck-and-heels down the precipice of revolution.

Joseph II. aimed at absolute government; the modern Imperial cabinet would have been perfectly satisfied with the establishment of Constitutional institutions, provided it had been allowed to exercise its just and legitimate power therein. Had the democratic party succeeded in swinging loose from Austria, it is more than doubtful whether they could have formed a nucleus of nationality among the Hungarians who seemed devoted to their views; for the heterogeneous elements around them could never have coalesced into anything approximating to unity of feeling, or identity of interests. The

struggle for supremacy among the different nationalities which the revolutionary party dreamed of congregating round themselves, would have been unceasing and bitter; for the Croatian, the Serbian, and almost all the Slavonian race, could never have submitted to Magyar dictation, so deeply embittered were their feelings against it, although they would have gladly acquiesced in the mild rule of the Austrian Government, which was of too elevated a nature to foster mere petty local prejudices, or to allow itself to be influenced by sectarian feelings.

Again, Joseph II. refused to be crowned, although the crown was in his own hands, therefore he could not legally rule over the Constitution of Hungary; while Francis Joseph was prevented from being crowned, because the symbol of sovereignty was carried away by the rebel party; nor could the latter promise to preserve a Constitution which the rebels themselves had declared extinct; for the Debreczin declaration for the establishment of a Provisional Government until the Diet decided whether a monarchy or a republic should be the Hungarian form of government, was tantamount to destroying the Constitution. Joseph II., moreover, carried away the crown, in the hope of intimidating

the Hungarians into a compliance with his anticipated violations of the Constitution. The modern rebels, by way of contrast, carried away the crown to prevent the King from performing *his* constitutional duties, at the same time intending to destroy the Constitution which strictly enjoined their due performance. Yet, with these glaring discrepancies between the two periods, there are certain parties who insist upon blaming the Austrian Government of the present day, as though it pursued the same policy, and was actuated by the same motives, as its predecessor of 1797; and with a determined perversion, too, of all fair analogy, these parties always refer to the period between 1811 and 1825, when the whole empire was shaken to its very base by the terrible inroads of Napoleon, during which period no Diet was convoked, instead of that between 1825 and 1847, through the whole course of which the Austrian Government ruled according to the strict injunctions of the Constitution, the Diets having been convoked legally, and at their stated times, and endeavoured, by every rational means, to conciliate the Hungarians. Surely, this is faction—blind, unreasoning faction—carried to an extreme.

Apart from the preceding digression, it is evi-

dent that the principles of the two governments were essentially different. In Austria, the monarchical principle has long prevailed; while in Hungary, on the contrary, the aristocratic, or feudal, has uniformly predominated. It is hardly to be supposed, under these opposite influences, that either party should render justice to the views and intentions of the other. The government of Vienna, naturally anxious for the well-being of all its subjects, sought, from the first, to extend to Hungary those institutions of civil and criminal law, and of general administration, which have produced a large measure of contentment and prosperity in its German provinces; but the dominant party in Hungary, dreading a restriction of what they called their constitutional rights, viewed with suspicion every movement of the Austrian policy, under an apprehension that some insidious design was aimed at their power. This jealousy against Austria was not solely confined to the privileged class, for the latter had inoculated the mass of the peasants, whose ignorance and credulity they had made completely subservient to their views, with the same pernicious feelings. The conflict, therefore, between the Imperial Crown and its Hungarian subjects is of old standing; and the former has maintained it

with more or less success, through the most trying periods, until the recent outbreak brought matters to a climax, which must completely change the relative position of both parties.

The nobles, or privileged class, paying no direct taxes themselves, opposed every attempt to exact a single florin more from the peasants than what was readily paid in the time of Maria Theresa, although the condition of the latter has materially improved since that period ; nor would they permit any alteration in the amount of their military contingent, either in war or in peace. In addition to these refusals, many of the nobles suffered their lands to remain half desolate, and their vassals half barbarous, lest any alteration in their social relations should afford a pretext for Imperial interference.

The crown, on the other hand, laboured earnestly to annihilate the prostrate condition of its Hungarian subjects, but with little effect. At length it had recourse to a different policy, and levied certain duties of export and import upon the produce and goods passing between Hungary and the Austrian States, not only with the view of adjusting the inequality of taxation, which had so long existed between the different portions of the empire, but also with the hope that the noble class in Hungary,

by this indirect species of coercion, would make some concessions to the unprivileged class, by means of which the latter might be alleviated in their condition.

This conciliatory policy of the Austrian government, however, was immediately seized hold of by the opposition party in the Diet, and those very transit-duties have since been converted into one of the stock-grievances against the former, as though their enforcement had been a measure of the most atrocious tyranny, when, in reality, its justness in relation to the other subjects of the empire could not be questioned for a moment.

Keeping the preceding facts steadily in view, the course of the recent drama in Hungary may be clearly traced, and the part of each of the leading actors in it correctly defined.

It would be a wilful perversion of truth and of common understanding, to mistake the designs of the Hungarian revolutionists—of the evil spirit that, more or less, animated them all in the attempted achievement of their ends. Of the principal agent in that calamitous movement it is almost unnecessary to say much, as his character has gradually developed itself in the series of measures which he adopted to accomplish his aims; and to all, except those of the most warped and prejudiced under-

standing, he must appear in the light of an unscrupulous and unprincipled demagogue.

In almost every age of the world, in which true freedom has been assailed by anarchical destructives—in Greece, in Rome, in the Italian Republics, and in modern France especially, for history is continually repeating herself—you will find the prototype of a Kossuth, and of the inferior spirits whom he subdued to his will, and made instrumental to his designs. Their name is legion; they spring up, as it were spontaneously, wherever the soil is congenial to their growth, and conducive to their aliment. They are the Upas-trees of the political world, which desecrate and destroy almost everything that comes within the sphere of their influence; and were there not a soul of good in things evil, these political *mala in se* would prove an irreparable and pestilential calamity to their fellow-creatures. To the proof of these asseverations.

The Hungarian question divides itself naturally into three parts. First, we have the Austrian government using its utmost energies to restrain the feudal privileges of the nobles, and to elevate the peasant-class. In addition to which the former has constantly aimed to rear up a middle-class, by conferring rights and immunities upon certain boroughs

and free towns. Secondly, we have the nobles, or privileged-class, for the most part perpetually thwarting the policy of the Austrian government, fearing the loss of their feudal power. Thirdly, we have the revolutionary or democratic party, watching the play between the preceding two, and ready to take advantage of every move that might give hope or promise of forwarding its own ulterior designs.

I have given you an outline of the struggle between the Imperial Government and the Hungarian nobles, which has been sustained, in one form or another, for so long a period, therefore shall confine myself to the zig-zag movements of the radical party, more especially during the last quarter of a century. Towards the close of 1825, a party sprung up in Hungary which, from its moderate opinions, and the apparent practicability of its plans, created a sympathy for its success throughout almost all Europe. In England it was especially hailed by the liberal party as a sign of regeneration for Hungary; but by those who were more conversant with its composition, and knew the materials with which it had to deal, it was viewed with apprehension and alarm. The Count Zechenyi was the nominal head of this party, and had he kept his adherents within the

limits of constitutional discretion, it might have proved highly advantageous to the cause of Hungary.

Zechenyi, there can be no doubt, was sincerely desirous of benefiting his country, and, had his genius been equal to his desires, it may be questioned whether Hungary would not have greatly advanced, both in constitutional knowledge and in material wealth, under his political guidance. In some respects he was an able man, and seemed to possess a clear perception of what his country stood in need of; while in others he showed a weakness and incapacity that is scarcely compatible with the preceding quality of mind, and which neutralized the practical good that he was otherwise capable of effecting. His establishment of steam navigation on the Danube, and his construction of mills for grinding flour, were unquestioned benefits to the Hungarians; while the compositions of his pen enlarged the minds of his countrymen upon political economy especially, at the same time that they reproved their vices and elevated their habits.* Yet the same mind

* Count Zechenyi is favourably known in this country by his *Kreditwesen* which is highly creditable to his ability, from the enlarged and practical views therein taken upon subjects, which, even in England, at the period when he

that could suggest, and practically carry out, such enlightened views, could entertain the Utopian

wrote that work, were not very widely diffused. With the view of opening the eyes of his countrymen to the errors of their industrial pursuits, he exclaims: "The circulation of money, activity, perseverance, and enterprise, are worth more than gold and silver. We must conquer the error that our national treasure lies in the mines of Schemnitz; nothing can raise our country but our own spirit; it is not the fault of our geographical position, but of our own hands, that we have no commerce," p. 103. In the same work he exposes, in the most unsparing manner, the condition of the privileged classes, in many of their social and domestic habits, especially as regards the use of credit, which he shews may be advantageous as a means of gaining wealth, but highly dangerous and degrading when applied to encourage unthrift and extravagance. Again, in his *Kelet Nepè*, he shewed clearly the revolutionary designs of the extreme radical party, and the lengths to which they were hurrying the country; at the same time he laid bare the hollow heart of Kossuth, his bold, bad ambition, his unscrupulous designs, and the unprincipled means which he adopted to carry them into effect. The Count Zechenyi is now in a mad-house in the neighbourhood of Vienna. This terrible calamity befel him soon after Kossuth obtained the supremacy in the Diet, and in the political direction of affairs; and may be attributed, in some measure, to the mortification which he endured at the thought of supporting a man who had been mainly instrumental in ruining his scheme of progressive reform. Poor Zechenyi! he warmed the viper too long, and flung it from him too late—the sting had been inflicted some time before he felt its pain.

scheme of elevating his country by isolating some of the best elements in its composition. To preserve the nationality of Hungary intact and entire—to blend all the jarring and discordant materials into a compact whole—to infuse an enlarged and catholic spirit into the mass of his countrymen, so that they might be animated by one sentiment, and instinct with a single principle—he energetically proposed that the language of a comparatively small section should become the national dialect, and supersede, in all matters of authority, the recognized languages of the country.

A proposition more likely to lead to the apposite results than those contemplated by its propounder could not possibly be conceived; it naturally split the country into sections, and raised one portion of the community against another, until every impulse of homogeneity had become entirely extinct. To elevate the Magyar, was to abase the Slovack; or, in other terms, it was to create caste, to perpetuate privilege, and to call into existence the very elements which practical wisdom and political foresight would have wished to suppress.

If Zechenyi had been desirous that his political code should rest upon its apex, instead of its

base, he ought to have pursued the precise course that he did; but practical observation must have taught him that the experiment had been often tried, and as often found defective in its operation. But his wayward disposition, which singularly warped some of the best aspirations of his mind, must have been largely predominant throughout the strange struggle which he made to establish the supremacy of the Magyar language; for the narrow views, the cramped sentiments, and the restricted principles, which are involved in that proposition, are so remarkably opposed to the wide and generous impulses which so prominently marked his general conduct in public matters, and so directly opposed to the generous instincts of his nature. The watchword of the liberal party, which Zechenyi may be said to have formed, was embodied in the following device—"Hungary, independent in all her legislation and administration, though nominally connected with Austria," or, as it was epitomized—" *Nationality of Hungary.*"

Like most party watchwords, "Nationality of Hungary" was vague, indefinite, and the mere outward symbol of a meaning which was concealed in the minds of those who adopted it. On the part of the radical section it meant separation from

Austria, and republican institutions; on the part of a great many of the Magyars it was construed into "*preservation of our privileges*;" and on the part of the loose hangers-on, in general a numerous race, who had nothing to lose, but everything to gain, in a social point of view, it was identified with the principles of change, which they naturally desired, in the hope that the latter might improve their condition, at whatever cost that change might be effected.

When the liberal party was first formed, it soon enlisted the discontented spirits to its standard; almost all the poorer nobles, and the unprivileged of the educated classes, a numerous body, were found in its ranks; and in almost all the provincial assemblies, and in the Diet also, a strong opposition, at least in wordy warfare, was maintained against most of the measures of the Austrian Government. The army, its organization and disposal; the church, its hereditary rights, and its sectarian adversaries; the peasant-class, its dependent condition, and the efforts of the government to relieve it; the revenue, its inequality in relation to the other dependencies of the empire, and the export and import duties imposed in consequence upon Hungarian produce *in transitu*; all these subjects were discussed, sometimes with an appa-

rent fairness, at others with a great deal of practical good sense, but seldom, throughout the long period of the Dietary struggles, with an earnest and sincere desire, by the majority of the deputies, to practically adopt the improvements which those discussions naturally suggested.

The conservative party, which adhered to the government in later years, invariably impressed upon the authorities of Vienna, that the only measures which could possibly have a salutary effect in Hungary, must be based upon the principle of respecting the rights and feelings of the Hungarian people, and the Austrian Government, it is almost unnecessary to remark, was generally prompt to adopt the advice of their friends and supporters; but the radical party,* which was gradually gaining

* The radical party, headed by Kossuth, generally opposed every measure of an alleviating tendency in the Diet, and endeavoured to pervert them to their own wild and revolutionary views. Kossuth, it is true, never ventured to maintain feudal privileges, but he invariably gave a wrong direction to every measure bearing upon that question, either proposed by the Government or the Conservative party, which must have tended to mitigate their severity upon the peasant-class; he was, however, too artful to oppose openly the interests of the latter class, and, apparently, had but one object in view—*separation from Austria.*

ground, succeeded in neutralizing this conciliatory policy, by inflaming the minds of the *Comitats*, on the one hand, and by exciting the fears of the *quasi-moderate* party on the other.

The career of Kossuth, the acknowledged leader of the radical party, furnishes some interesting materials for the historian of modern democracy. It has been chequered with more than the ordinary contrasts of good and bad, politically speaking, which generally characterize those of popular leaders. The remarkable observation of the late Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords to the then ex-chancellor, "that God had gifted him with great abilities, but that the devil seemed to direct them," may not inaptly be applied to the Hungarian demagogue. Kossuth is just the compound for a successful agitator.* Of honesty (of principle) he has

* Bacon, in his *Essay on Fortune*, says: "The Italians, when they speak of one that cannot do amiss, they will throw into his other conditions that he hath, *poco di Matto*. And certainly there be not two more *fortunate* properties than to have a *little* of the *fool*, and not *too much* of the honest." It is well known how artfully Kossuth could appear to be *played* upon, when, in reality, he was *playing* upon others. The unfortunate, but misdirected Batthyany was not the only victim of the artful demagogue, when the latter assumed to be a "little of the fool."

not over-much in his character; of duplicity, there is abundance; of moral courage, it may be placed at a low ebb; sincerity, he can simulate admirably; his mental powers are somewhat extraordinary; at the same time all these varied qualities are under the complete control of one master-passion—ambition. In this respect he may be compared, in miniature, to Milton's hero, who infinitely preferred the *rule* below to *subjection* above; nor does the comparison fail, when the hell of wild excitement in Hungary, which was mainly produced by Kossuth, is contrasted with the peaceful issue which might have been ensured, by less daring and selfish minds.

But that was not the aim of Kossuth, who lived upon excitement, who revelled in anarchy and destruction, and who would have pined away under the regime of peaceful progress, and rational routine. There is many a prototype of the Hungarian demagogue adumbrated in the page of

Zechenyi, it is known, had his misgivings of the man at an early period, but the only man of note, who saw right through his character, was Count Dessewffy, who opposed him manfully, not only in the Pesth *Assembly*, but also in the able journal which he started (the *Viläg*), with the view of arresting the revolutionary designs of the radical party.

history.* From the commencement to the close of his public career, Louis Kossuth has practised the tortuous and selfish course of action ; and if you follow him through his winding course of political writing and publishing, you will find him advocating the wildest opinions, stirring up the bitterest enmities, and exciting the worst passions, among his

* It may not, perhaps, fall within the range of political warfare to rake up every distinct act of a public man which will not bear the strictest investigation ; yet there are those of a certain moral *status*, which may be alluded to with perfect fairness, especially as no attempt has been made to remove the impression which they have naturally left on the minds of every impartial observer. A charge has frequently been brought against Kossuth, with regard to certain pecuniary transactions, and it has never been met with a direct denial, or with the express desire to have it investigated ; and the peculiar line of defence which his friends have uniformly observed, rather strengthens than otherwise the justness of the charge. A Leipzig pamphleteer has attempted to slur over this charge ; but he does it in so bungling a manner, and deduces the honesty of his hero from such strange hypotheses, that it requires but little penetration to perceive that Kossuth ought to exclaim, as regards the latter, "God keep me from my friends !" Since the above letters were written, and while they are passing through the press, there appears some remarkable observations in the Hungarian correspondent of the *Times*, besides a letter from Count Zichy, which, in a great measure, support the charge to which allusion is made.—*Editor.*

countrymen. Witness the “fly-sheets” of the *Comitats*, which were so artfully directed to support the radical party, and so unfairly, nay, dishonestly conducted against his political opponents. And the same remark may be applied to his journal, the *Pesthi Hirlap*, which was written down to the vicious taste of the most democratic class, the half-educated, and self-sufficient, spouters in the *Comitats*, whose number are “legion” in Hungary. Again, his attempt to establish a joint stock company for the protection of trade and manufactures in Hungary*—in a country where there is little trade, in the common acceptation of the term, and less manufactures, and where the laws, I believe, have no cognizance of a bill of exchange, never having, it is fair to assume, such an instrument of trading intercourse, submitted to their tribunal. The object

* The *Vedegyelet*, or defensive union, was established in 1844, by Kossuth, who inveigled the young Count Batthyany to lend his name and influence towards its support. The latter became President to the Union, and Kossuth, as a matter of course, was made Director of it. Many of the moderate liberals subscribed towards its formation, under the assumed plea that it would benefit the interests of Hungary in general, but those of Pesth in particular; it did neither—it could do neither, but it benefited the interests of a single individual—Louis Kossuth!

was palpable enough ; it was to raise money, and place the disposal of that money in the hands of Louis Kossuth. In other terms, the projected company was simply an instrument to enable him to carry out his ulterior designs, and to aggrandize his own personal importance. The motives of an individual, endued with a sane mind, can only be divined by his actions ; and the abolition of all privileges, which, in reality, was nothing better than the vilest plunder of the property-class—the last, the meanest, and the most reckless of all expedients, which was proposed at the ripe time by Kossuth, is alone sufficient to test the honesty of his principles, and the integrity of his aims. Had not the Austrian army stepped in at the precise moment, you would have witnessed a similar catastrophe to that which occurred in France, during the first revolution, when the *châteaux* were in flames ; when murder, conflagration, and confiscation in its most hideous form, were in the full fury of their terrible course.

At length, Kossuth obtained a seat in the Diet, through the influence of Count Batthyany and others of the liberal party, when he seemed to have reached the climax of his wishes ; for he had long been aiming to gain a point from whence he could

direct his singular powers to the attainment of the object he had in view. He soon became the "God of the Galleries," in the assembly, and shaped his speeches in all cases, irrespective of principle or the commonest degree of political honesty, to meet their views and excite their applause. It was a bitter moment for Zechenyi, who aspired to the leadership of the Conservative liberals in the Diet, when Kossuth's over-mastering powers began to develope themselves; that well-meaning, but wayward nobleman, divined at once the decline of his own influence and the sacrifice of those principles which he had so steadily advocated, and which he sincerely believed to be conducive to his country's welfare. Nevertheless, he quailed before the superior genius of Kossuth, and felt his comparative littleness, as a public declaimer; hence, in the opinions of many, he sought refuge in what was called moderate conservative principles—the halting-place which weakness and imbecility gladly rest at, simply because they have neither the power, nor the pluck, to move, either in one direction or another—having fallen back from the advanced ground of liberalism which he occupied, before the former had shewn him the danger of extreme examples, by "bettering his instructions."

It was under the influence of this feeling of inferiority, that Zechenyi probably gave utterance to the following significant observations:—"that the unjust and violent manner in which the question of nationality and language had been treated, would infallibly make bitter enemies of all the various races who composed the kingdom of Hungary; whereas, if they advanced with justice, impartiality, and conciliation, all would gladly have united in the consolidation of the Hungarian nationality with which they had originally commenced." At a subsequent period he accused the radical party with the design of "meditating a separation from Austria," which, as a matter of course, they indignantly denied, although it was manifestly the leading notion in their heads; and when, at length, the Kossuth clique shewed unmistakably its real aim, Zechenyi was struck with remorse, and deeply regretted having lent his aid in calling such a democratic *Frankenstein* into existence, who like his ideal prototype, was destined to destroy his immediate creators.

As the advancing surge of democracy swept away the *quasi-delittanti* republicans—the Zechenyis, the Wesselenis, and the Batthyanyis—who may be termed the Hungarian *Girondists*—the Robes-

pierres, the Dantons, and the Barras, of the *Mountain*, appeared for a time to top the waves of popular feeling; and these, in their turn, would have played their part, by unscrupulously sacrificing each other, when the sphere of factious supremacy should have been narrowed to the necessary point for bringing out their really selfish and contracted feelings. But, happily for these choice spirits, the course of events willed it otherwise, and the Kossuths can now enjoy the credit for the best of intentions—at least among the unthinking many, whatever may be the opinion entertained of them by the more practical and penetrating few.

I have traced, in as brief terms as possible, the rise of Kossuth to the giddy height of power; his fall from thence may be hit off in a similar manner, and yet convey a correct outline of the principal circumstances by which it was attended. It has already been remarked, that the object of the radical party was to cause Hungary to pass through the progressive phases of *reform*, *rebellion*, and *revolution*; the first was effected, when the Diet echoed the device of “Hungary independent in all her legislation;” the second was attained when the constitution of 1848 was forced upon the Emperor, at the time that he was politically

powerless :—"Total separation from Austria, yet retaining the Austrian dynasty; and the third was accomplished, when Kossuth caused himself to be made Dictator—"wholly independent and dis-united, and erected into a republic." Before the thread of connection was entirely broken, it was amusing to watch the dexterity with which Kossuth passed it through his fingers, and how skilfully he stretched it to the precise point of attenuation; but when, at length, it snapped asunder, how quickly did he lay aside the jesuitical quiet, and the plausible cunning, which he had heretofore practised with such marvellous success. He doffed immediately the sleek and fawning attitude which was his wont towards the privileged orders, who, in many respects, were his prime supporters, and assumed the most haughty, dictatorial, and domineering bearing, whenever they came "between the wind and nobility" of his authority.

It was the Vienna ovation that capped the climax of Kossuth's vanity, and hoisted him into power, and with guards of honour, princes and nobles waiting upon him, and the "sweet mob" dragging his carriage through the streets, it was not to be expected that his brain could withstand such intoxicating incense. And when he talked exultingly

on his return to Presburg, of having held the fate of the House of Hapsburg in his own hands, he simply befooled his hearers, as well as himself, who were weak enough, and wicked enough, to believe any absurdity so long as it told against the Austrian government. The House of Hapsburg is not to be shaken in the palm of a demagogue's hand—its roots are too widely spread to be held by so puny a grasp, too deeply seated to be wrenched up by the transitory tumult of a city, even though it may be the capital of the empire.

Again, look at Kossuth in possession of power, when his colleagues were preaching, nay, praying for a conciliatory line of policy, seeing that Hungary was in the agony of a dissolution—that civil war was fiercely raging within her own bosom—how did he comfort himself, under these trying circumstances ? With the most vulgar insolence, not only treating their advice with contemptuous disdain, but insolently sneering at its weakness and imbecility. He would not listen, for a moment, not he, at the proposal for conciliating the Croats and Servians, although it was made by Szechenyi, Corvos, and Deak, and strongly supported by the Archduke Stephen, the then Pala-

tine. Nothing less than submission or extermination of those nationalities would satisfy the great apostle of liberty—the staunch advocate of freedom of opinion, and preservation of national rights; therefore the Croatian malcontents who were merely wishing to preserve what Kossuth was pretending to obtain—*nationality*—were to be treated as though they rebelled against the sovereign power of the state.

This non-conciliatory policy towards the Croats and the Servians was on a par with the proposition which Batthyány journeyed to Innsbruck to submit to the Imperial Court, at the immediate suggestion of Kossuth:—"That the Hungarians would render the Emperor every assistance in Italy, on condition that the Court would support Hungary against Croatia." In other terms, Kossuth and Co. proposed to lend their aid in chastising the Italians, who pretended to be fighting for liberty, provided assistance were rendered them to punish the Croats, who merely wished to preserve their liberty; and this proposition was made by those who had actually plunged their country into the abyss of rebellion and civil war, merely under the pretext to guard against any violation of the liberty which they enjoyed. Well

might Madame Roland exclaim :—" Oh liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name !"

The two great levers of Kossuth's power, when he had flung off all restraint, and forced the state-machine out of the beaten road into the unbroken and irregular track of rebellion, were the emission of notes, and the abolition of privileges. By the first he obviated, for a time, the necessity of appealing to the people for the ways and means of carrying out his plans, which surprised and astonished the Hungarians, albeit never having had experience of such matters ; and, by the second he naturally enlisted almost all the peasant-class on his side, who were not upon the best terms with their landlords, under the belief that they should possess the land in their own right, which they simply occupied, in the event of matters terminating successfully for the popular party. Had O'Connell, when in the plenitude of his repeal agitation, offered the *Conacreites* the land which they simply tilled, if they enabled him to carry repeal, it would have been precisely analogous to the scheme which Kossuth carried into effect ; but the Irish agitator shrank from so daring an extremity, and contented himself with promising less tangible, but more illusory

advantages. Kossuth carried out his plans of plunder, *de facto*. O'Connell simply hinted at such a contingency. The fall and flight of the Hungarian demagogue are the natural results of such wild and mad-headed schemes, which generally correct themselves in the public mind, but, unhappily, that correction is not effected, until the propounders of such schemes have succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of the weak, ignorant, and easily-deluded classes, who, in a majority of instances, became the tools with which the more cunning few are accustomed to work out their own selfish ends.

CHAPTER IX.

COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE CONDITION OF THE SUBJECTS OF
AUSTRIA, AND THOSE OF OTHER EUROPEAN STATES.

I SHALL now make a few brief remarks upon the Austrian Government, and its general policy in relation to the various states which acknowledge its sway, as they may furnish you with a collateral light, as it were, and enable you more fully to comprehend the Hungarian question. The real character of the Austrian Government, permit me to remark, is but imperfectly understood in England, and has been strangely, and in many instances, wilfully misrepresented. You will find, generally, ignorant and indiscriminate hatred on the one hand; and on the other, injudicious and unqualified adulation. Such, for the most part,

have been the opinions of the enemies, and the advocates of Austrian policy; and both, it is almost unnecessary to remark, equally prejudiced, equally passionate, and equally erroneous. Between these extreme views, there has been no *mezzo termine*, upon which the judgment could rest for an unimpassioned and impartial consideration of the Imperial *régime*—for a calm survey of its actual condition and tendency, by which the relative good and evil inherent in its nature might be clearly discerned, and justly estimated.

The Government of Austria may be said to be *sui generis*, and can be more easily described by a series of negative, than by positive, expressions. It is *not* a despotism, like that of Russia, wherein *fear* constitutes the basis of its existence; neither is it so repressive in its spirit as that of Prussia, wherein the machinery of military discipline so largely predominates; nor is it so despotic as that of France, in which the centralizing principles of Napoleon are so completely carried out, that all inequalities and obstructions are either neutralized, or smoothed down to one uniform and subordinate level. Viewed in relation to the character and genius of the people, which it has directed for so long a period, I should venture to term it a *protec-*

tive government—pre-eminently, and practically *protective*, using that term in its broad, comprehensive, and most significant sense. There is an old adage which says, that it is the *nature* of a thing, and not its *name*, that constitutes its real value; and recent experience has taught a once high-spirited people, that a government may assume the name of a *Republic*, which implies freedom and intelligence in its action, and yet, practically, may prove itself a rank and unmitigated despotism. The Austrian Government has been designated, *ad nauseam*, a despotism; nevertheless, practically, its general tendency, when unwarpd by fear of revolutionary encroachment, has been to *protect* the weak against the powerful amongst its subjects—to hold the balance with an even hand between the oppressed labourer and his feudal tyrant—to respect the religious feelings and prejudices of its numerous people, by crushing every attempt at persecution on the part of the dominant race—to develope, by quiet and judicious means, their industrial resources—in short, to improve, to elevate, to enrich, and, in every way consistent with their respective capacities, to advance the welfare of its varied population.

This principle of Austrian rule is somewhat

difficult to explain; nevertheless, it works well, and the attachment of the people—of course, I mean the German portion of the empire—to the existing order of things, springs solely from a general sense of physical comfort, and moral contentment. The genius of the Austrian Constitution, to still further simplify our meaning, ascribes to the Sovereign, as to a common father, a power theoretically absolute and uncontrolled, but founded, practically, on the willing obedience of those over whom it is exerted. It regards the whole community as members of one family—varying, it is true, in station, in avocations, and in faculties, but all equally objects of the solicitude of the ruling power, and all yielding a filial, not a servile, dependence. Hence the aim of the House of Hapsburg, while wielding the sceptre of nominal autocracy, has been to conciliate the affections, rather than excite the apprehensions, of its subjects; and, although it permitted no question of its supreme authority, it rendered the weight of that authority so light and indulgent, that it became the instrument of individual safety and happiness, and instead of passive obedience being simply a duty, it was considered a habit and a pleasure.

It may safely be affirmed, *à priori*, that a govern-

ment conducted on the will, or caprice, of one mind—in short, an autocracy—would be an impossibility in the present state of public opinion throughout, not only Europe, but the civilized world. In every country there is a force of public opinion to which the sovereign must bow, or he will be overpowered in his attempts to oppose it. As education and civil rights are more or less extended, so will the number of individuals from whose aggregate sentiments this public opinion is derived. Public opinion may reside in whole masses of the population, as in the United States of America, or in particular classes, who exercise a preponderant influence over the rest of the community, as in England. In some countries it may be wielded by the army, in others by the church; but, neither at Petersburg, nor Vienna, any more than in London, Paris, or the United States, can the sovereign power be conducted on principles at variance with the sentiments and feelings of the majority; or, what may be the same in result, at variance with the influential class, by whom the sentiments and feelings of that majority are directed.

But the principle upon which the Austrian rule has been wielded for more than a century, the checks by which it is practically restrained, and the

machinery of its mild and protective operation on those who are subject to it, are points upon which considerable misapprehension prevails, and upon which a great deal of malevolent ingenuity has been exercised. On the one hand it has been asserted, that the Imperial Government allied itself to an intolerant church, for the purpose of checking the springs of public opinion, and of neutralizing the effects of education ; while, on the other, some have gone so far, in the blindness of their malevolence, as to assert that the alliance was affected to secure an abject political abasement, in order that a quiescent servility might be perpetuated. Again, a great deal has been said about the secret police ; its controlling political feeling, and its invasion of domestic privacy ; of a revenue being exacted by military force from an impoverished people ; and of the exclusion of foreign literature, so that the means of enlightenment should not be within the reach of its subjects. Almost all these charges have been unjustly made against the Austrian government ; many of them, indeed, are gross exaggerations, resting upon the narrowest grounds, and which nothing but the most malignant fancy could so have magnified.

In no country in Europe, *cæteris paribus*, has

natural improvement, in its most important branches, gone on more steadily and increasingly, than in the Austrian dominions, during the last quarter of a century. Instead of allying itself with the Romish church, as alleged, for dwarfing the minds of its subjects, the Austrian government has a greater control over the Catholic clergy than any other power in Europe, and keeps the spiritual despotism of Rome in completer check, than either Prussia, Spain, or even France. As regards education, the plan pursued by Austria, as I shall presently shew, is with the view of elevating the condition of her people, but not to let it precede their material interests, which, in a majority of cases, is of very doubtful utility. Then, again, as regards the police, it is notorious that they are comparatively quiescent in the German States, where order and contentment in general prevail; but, in the Italian States, where the propagandism of revolutionary disturbance is so vigilantly encouraged by foreign emissaries, it must be acknowledged that they frequently are too prominently in the foreground of administrative rule. But this, after all, is a political necessity, therefore ought to be considered as an exception to the general rule of its action. With regard to foreign literature, it is

difficult to say whether the pernicious dogmas of France, especially, would work a greater good than evil upon the necessarily crude, and ill-formed minds of the Austrian subjects; and this remark is as applicable to other European states as well as to Austria, who cannot be supposed capable of judging for themselves in so critical a matter. Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that the Austrian interdict of foreign literature is so rigid, as might be inferred from the charge which, in general, is so positively made, as it can be easily disproved by any intelligent mind who has visited Austria, and who has had the desire to indulge in the luxury of foreign publications. Almost any book can be purchased in the booksellers' shops, but not quite so openly as in England, or in France; nor arranged before the eyes of the comparatively ignorant multitude, in the shop-windows, in so glaring a manner, as in the latter countries. The other charge, respecting the exaction of revenue, is a pure invention, as I shall presently shew. The Austrian government, it must be acknowledged, has brought on itself much misrepresentation by its great aversion to publicity; and, although it does not deserve the flippant sarcasm of M. Girardin, who remarked, with more point

than truth, that "Austria carried her repugnance to publicity to the extent of not choosing to be praised. Praise and blame are equally offensive to her, and in her anxiety to avoid all discussion, she religiously preserves the most entire silence, with fanatical austerity," still, it has guarded, in my opinion, too scrupulously against wielding the weapons of modern political warfare, and much to its own detriment also, in the eye of public opinion. Having great internal difficulties to encounter in its march of general improvement, arising partly from aristocratical opposition, and partly from financial disorder, the great desire of the Austrian government has been hitherto tranquillity; and it has been content, perhaps unwisely, to bear in silence the misrepresentations made abroad, rather than provoke a refutation of them at home. Nevertheless, this charge of non-publicity must be received with some degree of reservation, for in statistical matters, abundant information exists, and has been published periodically, by the Austrian authorities themselves.

The first great obstacle which Austria had to encounter in her internal policy, was the feudal system which prevailed generally throughout her dominions. Until a comparative recent period it

existed, in all its iron rigour, in Hungary and Bohemia, and with more or less force in every German province. The Austrian authorities found it useless to attempt the amelioration of the people, while one law existed for them, and another for their feudal oppressors—while the former bore all the taxation of the state, and were bound to work indefinitely for the latter.

In all the southern German provinces this system of feudal oppression gradually yielded to the power of the crown ; but in Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia, it continued unbroken until the year 1773, when a general rising of the peasants against their lords took place, in the latter dependencies. The crown, it is inferred, viewed these movements with complacency, if it really did not encourage them ; at all events they were suppressed with the mildest forbearance, and the opportunity was eagerly seized to introduce the *Urbarium*, or Rural Code, which, for the time, conferred fixed rights upon the people. Previous to that important law being established, the cultivators of the soil—the *peasants*—were completely at the mercy of their lords. The number of *robots*, or days of forced labour to be performed on the lord's estate, depended upon the mere will of himself, or of his agents, Sunday being the

only day of legal exemption from compulsory work. Complaints could only be heard in the Court of *Herrschaft*, or Manor, when the lord himself, or his paid fiscal, was the sole expounder and executioner of the law. The cultivators could not even remove from their habitations, save with the lord's permission; they were virtually and literally *adstricti glebæ*. The peasant-class at length craved the protection of the crown against their oppressors, but its power was too feeble to compete with the compact force of the feudal aristocracy; however, in the year 1772 the sovereign strenuously urged on the Bohemian and Hungarian lords the expediency of limiting and defining the *robots*, services, and dues, so as to leave to the peasant a certain portion of time for the cultivation of his own plot of land, although it was unsuccessful in its appeal. At length the terror occasioned by the peasant insurrections afforded the crown the opportunity of putting forth its power, and acting vigorously in its own sense of right, which it had long sought for; hence the enactment of the *Urbarium*,—the Austrian peasant's *magna charta*. The general principles of the *Urbarium* are now applied to all the provinces of the empire, although they vary in detail, according to the different localities; the object being to

adopt the law, as far as possible, to existing circumstances. The *Urbarium* fixes the property, the rights, and the services of the peasant; and the *robots* are defined, with certain modifications, according to the extent of the peasant's holding. The measure itself was highly unpalatable to the nobles; but the apprehension of still further evils from the peasant-risings induced them to give it a reluctant acquiescence; and, from that time to the present, a series of additional improvements has been gradually introduced, tending to raise the condition of the peasants, to rear up the towns, while, at the same time, the privileges of the lords have been gradually lowered. It is natural, therefore, that this levelling process should be bitterly hated by those who, apparently, were the sufferers by it; and the nobles, especially, complained of the imposts which equitably fell upon their own shoulders, not having been accustomed to any portion of the state-burdens, or taxation. Even now the nobles of Hungary, as I have already remarked, are not subject to direct taxation on their lands, their moveables, or their persons; while, on the contrary, in Bohemia, and the other German provinces, the nobles pay their share of the state-imposts; and such has been the effect of subjecting all classes to an equality of taxa-

tion, that, although the average taxation of the empire is only equal to 7*s.* 6*d.* per head, the government draws in direct taxes from Prince Lichtenstein alone, levied on his extensive domains, about £15,000 per annum. This anti-feudal policy of Austria has drawn down upon it a great deal of undeserved censure on the part of those whose influence has been diminished by it; but it has proportionately awakened the warm support of the middle and lower classes from a sense of its protecting power, and from the conviction that they must be advanced in the social scale so long as that policy prevails.

To understand, thoroughly, the genius of the Imperial government, we must, however, look to the moral peculiarities, which cement it so closely with the general feelings of the people. The first, and most important of these, is the alliance between public education and the civil government, which forms one of the most peculiar features in the policy of the state. The education of the subject is directed, principally, to one point: namely, to form in the mind a respect for authority—a confidence in its wisdom, and a contentment under its protective sway. No one can hold office, however humble, without a certificate of education, which testifies that his mind has been adapted to that uniformity

of character, which pervades the entire system. The certificate must set forth due attendance at lectures, a strict examination of the student in his course of education,* and also his orderly and moral conduct during his academical career.

With these qualifications, the candidate is morally certain of obtaining an appointment, if such be his object, and the order of advancement in the civil service is uniform, and according to age in that service. Relying upon a pretty accurate estimate, there are upwards of 27,000 persons holding permanent, and 6,000 temporary, employment in the civil service; in addition to this number of *employés*, there are upwards of 80,000 individuals in the pay of the State, such as subordinate servants, toll-

* The Archduke John has been mainly instrumental in extending education in the Austrian dominions, and to an extent that is but little known in Europe. His reply to an intelligent traveller who chanced to visit the reading room in the *Johanneum* at Gratz, upon the latter inquiring as to the advantages of the working classes receiving an education, is highly characteristic of the man: "It enables us," said the Archduke, "to keep young men from idleness and vice, by attracting them to read, and improve their minds. It is enough, as to the mass of mankind, to give them general, not profound instruction. If a master-genius arise, he will instruct himself on that *substratum*, and here we give him the means of doing so."

collectors, Custom-house men, workers in the royal mines and fabrics, &c., all of whom must have received certificates of education, though of a lower class, before they could be entitled to public employment.

The local and internal administration of Austria is *sui generis*. In every province there is a *Stände*, or States, comprised of a considerable number of the principal inhabitants. The composition of these States varies in different parts of the empire, and rests on laws and customs derived from the Middle Ages. In some respects they resemble the municipal corporations of England. The number of these *Stände* is various, and is relative to the ascendancy which the government has gained over the feudal aristocracy, being greater where the aristocratic power is weak, and *vice versâ*. The *Stände* meet at least once a year, and form one Chamber, without any distinction of classes; the resolutions of the body being ruled by a majority of votes. The President is either the governor of the province, or some high officer of the Crown, and no sitting of the *Stände* can be held but in his presence, or in that of a Royal Commissioner, whose sanction is necessary to all its proceedings. The Crown has the initiative in all measures, but listens

to the suggestions of individuals, when confined to local matters.

The Sessions generally commence by the demand, annually made by the Crown, for the portion of direct revenue to be raised in each province. When the demand is registered and apportioned to the separate districts, the Deputies then pass to matters of local interest. They have no legislative power, strictly speaking, but their administrative duties are important, and onerous in the highest degree, as they have a direct control over local establishments, revenues, and endowments for provincial purposes; and their representations to the authorities at Vienna are generally listened to and adopted. There is little of the popular principle in the composition of these assemblies, the members being generally selected from the influential and propertied class of landowners, farmers, miners, and merchants; nevertheless, these members generally enjoy the confidence of the public, and the government finds it advantageous to govern the provinces, as much as possible, through the agency of these local bodies.

In the Lombardo-Venetian states, a more popular system prevails than in the German provinces of the empire. Each of the two provinces has its

Assembly, invested with similar powers to the German *Stände*, but their internal composition varies considerably. The Italian states have neither ecclesiastical members, nobles sitting in right, both of birth and of property, nor deputies of close corporations; but the members of their Assemblies are all elected through the medium of a triple process of election.

The two great classes—the *Contadini*, the proprietors of land, and the *Cittadini*, the inhabitants of towns—are the primary electors, the suffrage depending on the payment of a certain sum in annual taxes. These electors select from their body, by vote, a council of election, who must possess a higher property qualification than the primary electors; then the primary elected nominate from themselves a certain number of candidates, and from these candidates the Crown selects those who shall act as members of the Provincial Assembly, at the same time retaining the power of rejecting all, and of ordering a fresh election. The constitutional dogma of Austria is, that taxation is the right of the Crown; but this right must be exercised through the local assemblies. The Crown does not ask a supply, but intimates the amount it wants, which the Assembly then raises according

to the existing laws. In appearance, these assemblies seem to have little independent action; but, in practice, they have great power, and are the organs through which the public voice reaches the government.

The legislative and executive power of the Austrian empire centres in the Sovereign, and is exercised partly in the form of original edicts, and partly in that of rescripts, issued in reply to applications from the provincial administration. These edicts and rescripts being forwarded to their respective local bodies, are annually printed for general use, and distributed among those who are the administrators of affairs. The executive power is conducted by means of councils, at the head of each department, resembling the Treasury and Admiralty Boards in England, who transmit their instructions through a number of subordinate authorities, all of whom are dependent upon the Supreme Office. Formerly, these councils acted independently of each other, and a want of unity and efficiency was naturally the result; but the late monarch, Francis, combined all the several departments, and placed Prince Metternich at their head, who infused an order and energy into the whole

machinery of the government, which had not previously existed.

Such is a faint outline of the organization of the Austrian Government. In every branch of the public service, in the arrangements for public education and civil instruction, the administration of justice, provision of medical aid for the sick, and charitable support for the destitute ; also for the collection of the public revenue and the repression of public disorder, there is a series of authorities, descending in regular gradation, from the sovereign on the throne to the humblest country-village official, each rendering statements, in the fullest details, to his immediate superior, and acting under his immediate instruction, so that by a perpetual circulation of reports and directions between the Imperial seat of power and the extreme ramifications of the provinces, there is produced an unity and energy which pervades the whole political fabric.

Yet the Austrian Government has had its difficulties to contend against, which, more or less, are inherent in all political institutions, and not particularly confined to any one peculiar form of government. The great difficulty of Austria has been how to treat the *transition* from a feudal state of property

to one of a less restricted nature ; and while she preserved comparative tranquillity amongst her various subjects, how, at the same time, she was to direct her policy so as to develop their utmost resources, and produce the greatest amount of social and political contentment. The same difficulty has beset the other great European governments, in one form or other, and has been treated according to the peculiar exigencies of each respective state, rather than upon any premeditated and organized scheme of policy. Prussia treated the *transition-question* in a summary manner, the results of which are now perplexing her most fearfully ; for she destroyed the connecting link between the throne and the mass of her subjects without providing a substitute ; therefore, she has no sheltering-place from the storms of popular commotion, for the kingly power, except the military, which is not always to be relied upon, however admirably it may be organized.

The bold *coup-d'état* of Stein may be admired by a certain school of political reasoners, but when measured by its results, it is more than doubtful whether it has not created a greater evil than it removed ; for almost all changes, especially those which involve the conditions of property, to prove

beneficial, must necessarily be of a slow and progressive nature. The wisest innovations are those which frequently cast their shadows before them, and the statesman who prematurely presses them into practice, must be prepared for a certain amount of reaction, which generally retards rather than accelerates the principal object in view. The Austrian policy has been studiously directed to avoid such an evil ; and, with few exceptions, it has been singularly fortunate in that respect ; while, on the other hand, some of its neighbours are reaping the bitter fruits, even now, of a policy which was prematurely aimed to effect the same purpose more than half a century ago.

In France, as in Austria, the Crown struggled, with more or less success, for a long period, against its feudal lords ; and the principal means of effecting its purpose was the centralizing influence of the capital with its luxury and corruption. The Court surrounded itself with pleasure and splendour, principally with the view of attracting its powerful nobles to participate in both ; so that while the latter gratified their sensual enjoyments, they might at the same time dissipate their resources, and by that means sacrifice their independence. The Court certainly effected its pur-

pose, but it left a terrible legacy to its successor. Instead of flattering and pampering those whom it had effectively suppressed—of perpetuating a *privilege*, for the nobly-born were alone qualified to hold rank in the army or the State, where *power* had ceased to exist—the Court of France ought to have called a middle class into existence to supply the place of its denuded nobles. But, in lieu of this rational course of policy, it continued to recognize a broad line of distinction between the noble and the plebeian class, by maintaining the barbarous maxim of law, that commerce degraded nobility, and that those who were engaged in such degrading pursuits were not entitled to aspire to the prerogatives of the latter.

The people of France, therefore, gained nothing by what the nobles lost ; the former still paid all the taxes, yet they were excluded from the honours of the State, and insulted by privileges in which they could never hope to participate. Hence the fearful explosion, in a great measure, when the *Tiers-Etat* were evoked from the masses ; for there was a long muster-roll of abuses, insults, and contumely—of unprovoked injuries on the one hand, of unmerited cruelty on the other—to be adjusted, which had been too long allowed to accumulate,

and whose violence might have been mitigated by a timely and judicious concession.

The conduct of Austria has been directly opposed to that of France in this important respect. While she subdued her noble-class, she imposed upon them their fair share of taxation ; at the same time, the military, civil, and the ecclesiastical institutions were alike opened to all classes of the people. Again, in diminishing the feudal privileges of the few, she has studiously shaped her administration of justice, so that the many should sensibly feel the effect of her protecting and equitable influence.

All are equal before the Imperial tribunals ; and where the feudal courts exist, the Crown fiscal steps in to shield the humblest subject, which causes the mass of the labouring classes to consider the Crown as their natural protector. Neither does the Imperial policy direct itself to seduce the wealthier class of the nobles to dissipate their substance at Court, although frequently alleged against it ; but, on the contrary, it endeavours to make them useful resident proprietors, by its provincial councils, of which they naturally form a large component part, although not a preponderating one. The Austrian Government also grants patents of nobility to those who are engaged in commerce and manufactures,

and holds such occupations in the highest esteem, as her merchant and banker-barons amply attest. It is this conciliatory policy which has strengthened the ties between the great mass of her subjects and the Crown, and which has preserved the latter through so many trying vicissitudes.

It is a common remark that the heterogeneous members of the Austrian empire must naturally separate, as their material power increases, however mild and genial may be the rule of the Austrian Government, and that, differing as they do in language, in habits, and in interests, a slight shock would suffice to produce the separation. That shock has been given to the Imperial Empire, in all its uncohering aggregation, more than once, and recently with terrific force; yet it remains intact, and is quietly gathering up the temporarily severed portions of its apparently heterogeneous whole. This kind of reasoning involves a fallacy in governmental rule, which it may be as well to expose, although its nakedness is sufficiently palpable, one would think, without such exposure. The fallacy is simply this—that a people ought to be governed by a portion of its own body, if it wishes to be governed well, which is simply based on the assumption that the true principles of Government

are necessarily inherent in every distinct people. No greater delusion could possibly exist, as the history of the world, both ancient and modern, clearly demonstrates. When Johnson penned his well-known parody, "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat," he conveyed in a satirical form a great political truth, which is a sufficient exposure of the fallacy just mentioned, without even any further illustration; nevertheless, I may as well point to the Roman Empire, which extended its sway over so many distinct nations, and, as compared to their respective native governments, I apprehend, with great advantage to the mass of the people in each. This was in what is called ancient times; in the modern age, at this day even, there exists a power whose sway is more extended than that of Rome, and whose subjects are more multifarious in their habits, their instincts, their intelligence, and perhaps, in their apprehension of what is really a good Government, than the aggregate of those who acknowledged the sway of the latter. That power is Great Britain, and the segment of the people over which it rules, to which I particularly allude, is the East Indians, all of whom, I apprehend, would infinitely prefer the mild and equitable Government of the former to the best,

even, that any of their own native princes ever practised towards them. By a parity of reasoning, then, it is somewhat puerile to contend that Austria cannot retain her sway over the Italian provinces, and even the Kingdom of Hungary, simply because there are certain Utopian notions of governmental rule in both those portions of the Imperial Empire.

The true test of a good Government is to be found in the material well-being of a people, and in their social and moral contentment; and estimating the Austrian rule by this standard, it may fairly challenge a comparison with any European Government at the present day, especially as regards its Italian provinces, which, acknowledgedly, are in the most thriving condition of any people on the continent. Among the mass of the people, too, in the Lombardo-Venetian territories, it is well known that they are attached to the Austrian Government, as was clearly shown when Radetzky's* troops advanced against the Piedmontese contingent, for

* See a pamphlet published at Turin by Bava, 1849, which describes the state of the different classes of society, with singular force and brevity; it also corroborates the view here taken of the Italian feeling as regards the Austrians, in several important particulars.

while the latter could scarcely obtain anything in the shape of food, even for money, the Austrians were received as deliverers, and treated in the most generous manner. Among many of the noble class, principally residing at Milan, and in other cities, whose unjust and oppressive privileges the Austrian Government has studiously curtailed, there is a natural antipathy to the rule of the latter; but among the great body of the middle, and the working classes, there is a decidedly large preponderance who are gratefully attached to that rule, because they find it comparatively more equitable and mild than that of their *native nobility*. The practised eye and ear of the traveller can easily recognize the force of this remark, however transient may have been his intercourse with that portion of the Italian people.

Then, again, as regards Hungary. Throughout the reign of Austria, for the last quarter of a century, over Hungary, as I have already shewn, what policy could have been more conciliatory than that of the Imperial Government, especially when it is borne in mind that the Hungarians are perpetually throwing obstacles in the way of its fair and legitimate working. Let every candid mind answer, after informing itself on the true state of the ques-

tion. Many of the nobles are aware of the position in which they stand in relation to the Austrian Government, and also to their peasants; yet, in spite of that knowledge, many of them fanned the flame of disaffection, which, had it been successful, must have swept them away in its fury and devastation. The policy, and the interest of the Crown also, has long secured the privileged class from the wild havoc of popular insurrections; but were the connexion with Austria dissolved—had the Kossuth scheme been fully successful—short would have been the period ere both the castles of the nobles, and their persons also, would be swept away by the horrors of a ferocious servile revolution. Reverting to the Italian States, it must be fairly acknowledged, that in point of material well-being, there is, perhaps, no country in Europe to equal them, not excepting the most thriving portions of Belgium and England. In point of fiscal and of military pressure, also, the Austrian rule is found by the Italians to be much lighter than that of the French; and all that can possibly tend to the advancement of agriculture, commerce, or general prosperity, is sedulously promoted.

The traveller who wanders over these blooming regions, will be struck with the contrast which they

present, when compared to other portions of Italy ; he will there see abundance of produce, excellent roads, handsome towns, an apparently well-fed, well-clothed people, and every indication of public and individual prosperity. Let him then turn his steps towards France — renovated, revolutionized France—and then he will have an excellent opportunity of instituting a parallel between the results of the Government of the latter and that of Austria.

CHAPTER X.

MIRABEAU AND KOSSUTH.

WHEN you read the grandiloquent addresses of Kossuth,* so full of tumid and meaningless

* The following bit of blasphemous *bletheramskite*—"we thank thee, *Moore*, for teaching us that word"—adorned the columns of a London morning paper, which advocated the Hungarian cause with unscrupulous energy, if not with judgment and ability.

"She," Kossuth's mother, "loved fervently and devotedly her country, her children, and—her *coffee*! She always spoke with respect and enthusiasm of her Louis, and thought he *had the head of Christ, the genius of Napoleon, the tongue of O'Connell, and the heart of Börne!*"

In my humble opinion, the following lines of Dryden, slightly paraphrased, would be nearer the mark :

Three *patriots* in three different nations born,
France, Ireland, and Hungary did adorn ;
The first in *thundering clap-traps* unsurpass'd,
In wheedling speech the next, in both the last ;
The force of *humbug* could no farther go,
To make *Kossuth* she joined the former two.

expressions, and compare him to Mirabeau, you must have just risen from the perusal of Thiers' tawdry sketch of the "Great Tribune." The decorative historian has plumed his daw in the most glaring colours, not so much for the purpose of depicting the real character of the bird, as to shew the pictorial powers of his own mind. In a catalogue *raisonné* of historical portraits, that of Mirabeau would occupy a prominent place—it is so cleverly bad. It always reminds me of that excellent work of art, the Saracen's Head on Snow Hill, which looked, the last time I saw it, awfully grand, and terrifically fierce. Thiers copied his sketch of the Count from the bronze *extravaganza* which adorns (?) the vestibule of the Chamber of Deputies, or rather the author and the artist idealized their hero upon the same vicious principles of art—the art of *attitudinizing*.

Read Dumont, in whose *Souvenir* you will find a more correct delineation of the great Plebeian, as Mirabeau loved to be called, and when you have studied it thoroughly, I think you will agree with me that there is but a faint resemblance between the French and the Hungarian demagogue. In many respects, Mirabeau and Kossuth are totally opposed to each other, both mentally and morally. *There was a certain high quality of

intellect in the former—a somewhat noble cast of thought—which were exhibited through the medium of a comparatively polished demeanour and a chivalrous spirit; while the latter, with all his singular powers of mind, is somewhat coarse in the texture of his character, and thoroughly plebeian in every movement and action. Mirabeau had fallen from his “high estate” in society; Kossuth had to attain that elevated position. The first affected to scorn the aristocracy, and sought their destruction, more from the chagrin and mortification which he endured as an outcast, than from the sincere and earnest convictions of a reformer; the latter regarded the aristocracy in the meanest spirit of envy, and cunningly attempted to destroy their influence, in the vain hope, apparently, of reducing the elevated standard of society to his own ordinary level.

No fox, on record, ever cried sour upon the fruit which was just placed out of his reach more significantly than Kossuth did. Self largely predominated in both, yet each acted from opposite impulses. The assumption of the title of *plebeian* Count, and his frenzy for the “rights of the people,” “the majesty of the people,” the common currency of your democrats in all ages—the coinage of the

real *enemies* of the people—marked Mirabeau as a hypocrite at heart: he made too great a show of virtue to be *really* virtuous—the common failing in those whose motives lack the ingredient of sincerity. The same remark will apply to Kossuth, as regards many of his actions, his pompous prayers on the field of battle, when all danger was over; his harangue to the troops in the rear, when the battle was raging in front at Schewchat, for example; his pretended homage at the thought even of civil war, at the very moment he was doing all he could to provoke it; these incidents, selected at random, are sufficient to establish a certain resemblance between the Hungarian and the French democrat, with this especial difference, that the cant of the former was of a commoner, coarser, caste than that of the latter; both, however, somewhat largely indulging in that commodity.

Again, when you express your surprise that France, after fifty years of political strife, after enduring the bitterest changes, the most cruel alternations, has not yet learned the peaceful arts of progress and civilization, although she has had the advantage of Mirabeau's instruction—"Must she," you exclaim, "with her superb intelligence,

still terminate her political disputes in strife and blood ?” Do not deceive yourself about “experience,” “superb intelligence,” and other fine phrases ; they have but a faint application to the political knowledge of France. In the latter respect, she is still a child, as it were, and has not learned even the common rudiments of political science ; although, strange to say, she flatters herself that she is a giant, and capable of instructing the world. France has a great deal to *unlearn* before she can frame her mind to receive the knowledge which is worth retaining, and which alone can direct her in the path of fruitful peace and healthful prosperity. In the Revolution of '89 she committed a grave blunder, from whence have flowed, principally, her political calamities ; and, unless she has the courage and sagacity to retrieve that error, still greater calamities are in store for her. France should have reformed her institutions, quietly and sagaciously in 1789, and not have torn them up by the roots.

If she had lopped off a branch here, and pruned a twig there, the old stem of the monarchy would have shot forth again in healthy and vigorous redundancy ; but instead of listening to the cool experience of practised hands, she was led captive

by the quacks and pretenders in political surgery, and they mutilated—nay murdered—her really healthy germs of vitality. In brief, she must eradicate those pernicious doctrines from her mind, which have generated the Utopian nonsense of *Fraternity* and *Equality*, in the form of her institutions, while the workings and spirit of the latter are daily giving the life to them.

The common experience of life, and the traditions of nations, are opposed to such absurd theories. How can France inaugurate a new era in the legislation of the world, when she scorns the experience of her predecessors, and disdains to proceed in the *antiquas vias* of the most enlightened communities of either past or present times. The forms of government may be varied and endless; but its principles, if true, are eternal, and no people can supersede them; the proofs of this remark, I apprehend, are sufficiently patent to the practical and reflecting mind.

You also continue to ring the changes upon the old terms—the people and the aristocracy. These mere abstractions mean anything and everything, according to individual sagacity, reason, or judgment. The “rights” of the many, and the “wrongs” of the few, are the pet phrases which

have perplexed the political world for ages, and will continue to perplex it, so long as mankind are incapable of reasoning rightly upon the knotty theorem in which these two conditions are involved. There appears but two classes in this world—the *Haves* and the *Haves-not*, and, by a law of necessity, the latter are perpetually struggling for a portion of what the former possess; but the misfortune is, that they want to possess that portion without labouring for it, which ought to be a condition of possession, either mediately or immediately. Were the *many* to have their own way in political matters, the result would be that the *few* would be pulled down to their condition, and all must alike be on the level of misery and destitution.

Look at the state of France at the present moment, and fathom the causes which have brought her to it. The whole basis of society, in that country, is thoroughly disorganized, and must be totally re-constructed before anything like a healthy superstructure can be reared upon it. And whence arises that deplorable condition of things? In a great measure from the *morcellement* of the land; or, in other terms, the adoption of the theory of the pseudo-philosophers of '89, the compulsory

division of property, which was to improve the condition of the *many*, and curb the tyranny of the *few*. The political economists of that age—your Mirabeaus—had no practical forecaste of the nature of the laws which ought to regulate property, or of the controlling and directing influence of a community, or they would have shrank from imposing their crude and jejune theories upon the legislation of their country. If there be one axiom in political science, better established than another, it is this—that every encouragement should be given to the *accumulation* of property, which is the true secret of social progress.

Without individual accumulation, there can be no progress—no extra source to appeal to, either to forward new undertakings, or to make up for old deficiencies. But the law in France is diametrically opposed to this principle—it is perpetually at war with the accumulation of capital, by its absurd *partage égal* enactment—and the result is what I have already stated. While that law exists, France cannot possibly progress in national wealth, the precursor of all other improvements; but on the contrary, under its dissolving influence, she must inevitably decline into the very slough of social disruption. Glance, for a moment, at the

peculiar operation of the law of *equal division*—property is progressively sinking in value, while its owners are increasing in numbers; hence you have slovenly cultivation, diminished capital, and a swarm of occupants on the land in the most wretched condition. Those “accursed tyrants,” the old noblesse, you will say, kept the mass of the people not only wretchedly poor, but pitiful slaves also. Granted. But, have the *peasant proprietors* no “accursed tyrants,” under the present condition of things? Is there not the mortgagee—the grasping, hard-mouthed, unyielding usurer, as one of their favourite writers designate him (Louis Blanc) —haunting the *propriétaire* like an evil demon?

That able writer, but mistaken politician, remarks, “Le morcellement du sol c’est la petite culture, c’est-à-dire le bêche substituée à la charrue, c’est-à-dire la routine substituée à la science. Le morcellement du sol éloigne de l’agriculture, et l’application des machines, et celle du capital. Sans machines, pas de progrès; sans capital, pas de bestiaux.”*

Again, you have the opinion of a much higher authority in political economy than Louis Blanc,

* Vide *Organisation du Travail*.

and a Frenchman likewise, that of *M. Michel Chevalier*, against the arbitrary *morcellement* of the soil:—"La division du sol a été poussée si loin, que certaines parcelles formant le lot d'une famille ne comportent plus la nourriture d'un couple de bœufs ou de vaches, et il arrive que la bêche s'y substitue à la charrue."*

The diminution of production, and the consequent general impoverishment of the great body of the French people, is the natural result of that pernicious law of *partage égal*, which has been so unjustifiably extolled by a certain class of misleading and mischievous writers and speakers.

The great bulk of the land in France is in the hands of mortgagees, who look for their "pounds of flesh" in the shape of interest, as regularly as the time comes round, and who give you little back in the shape of social expenditure, or for the purpose of recruiting the condition of the soil.

Facts and figures are stubborn things, and the sum annually paid in the shape of interest to mortgagees, is much greater than the rental exacted under the old *régime*, bad as that was, by some

* *Cours d'Economie Politique*, p. 66.

millions. The whole surface of France is pawned—literally pawned—for a sum whose bare interest is *twenty-eight millions of pounds sterling*. This is only one phase of the social condition of France, but, by the simplest induction, you may trace the operation of the same law through the whole relations of society.

I have dwelt upon the subject of France and her social condition, much longer than I should have done had you not somewhat disparagingly contrasted the condition of Austria with that country, especially as regards the material and intellectual state of the people. Had I space, a mass of statistical *data* might be furnished, which would establish beyond possibility of cavil, that the subjects of the Austrian empire, taken generally, are much better off, materially speaking, than the mass of the French people; and, as regards the relative amount of instruction imparted by the authorities in both countries, it is exceedingly doubtful to my mind, whether Austria has not the highest claim to approval. In both countries there is ample room for improvement in this respect;* but the first con-

* I will cite one authority of the state of education in France, whose evidence cannot be impugned: "We say, then, that the teacher is often regarded upon the same footing as the mendicant;

sideration should be the material well-being of the people, then instruction will prove a blessing instead of a curse, as is too frequently the case.

that between him and the cow-boy, the preference is often given to the latter; and that when the Mayors wish to give the teacher a proof of their friendship, they invite him to their kitchens." Again: "Ever on the alert to get an ample return for the exorbitant sum of two hundred francs, which must be paid to the schoolmaster, many of the municipal councils attach to that situation a host of various functions, any one of which would suffice to occupy the time of an individual. He must be gravedigger and village bellman; he must clean out the public wash-house, wind up the village clock, perform the functions of beadle and sacristan, purchase the sacramental bread, wash the church linen, and find his own brooms."—"As to the schoolmasters, you find them poor, ill-clad, teaching in wooden shoes, without stockings, waistcoat, or cravat. Notwithstanding the melancholy ideas which I had entertained of instruction in these countries, I was far from thinking that the teachers were in so deplorable a condition. Drawing with much difficulty fourpence, threepence, and even as little as twopence halfpenny per month from each pupil, what can become of the tutor when married and burdened with children?"

"Picture of primary instruction in France, from authentic documents taken from the Reports addressed to the Minister of Public Instruction, by four hundred and ninety inspectors instructed to visit all schools of France." By M. Lorain, Professor of Rhetoric in the College of *Louis le Grand*.

If such are the instructors, what must the instructed be? The answer to this question will indicate the state of education in France, and the general intellectual condition of the people.

The example of France has been so frequently held up to admiration by a great political party, and as worthy of all imitation by other nations, who are stated to be in a comparatively benighted and debased condition, that it is well to know what we really admire and recommend for especial adoption. Enlightened France! heroic France! free, brave, and contented France! a model for the millions; ah! little do the latter think that your outbursts, which periodically startle the world, are the result of your internal misery, and of your pauperised condition.

“How is this world deceived by noise and show!”

Yet, this was the armoury whence Kossuth drew his mischievous instruments for the destruction of his country, and would as effectually have accomplished it, as his prototype of 1789 did that of France, and by precisely the same means, had not the strong arm of authority paralysed his power. What a scene must Hungary have presented, had the wild and revolutionary schemes of Kossuth been fully carried out. Happily she has been spared that terrible calamity.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RECONSTRUCTIVE POLICY OF AUSTRIA.

IN order to appreciate the measures which the statesmen, to whose care and keeping the destinies of the Austrian empire are temporarily confided, anticipate carrying into effect, it may be as well to take a brief retrospective view of events, antecedent to the recent disruption, so that the evils existing in the system of rule hitherto observed, and the remedies which will be applied to remove them, may equally be apparent to our observation.

The grand aim of the Austrian statesmen, under the old *régime*, was to consolidate the finances of the empire, and place them upon a sound and healthy basis ; to develop the internal resources of

each component part of the state ; and to diminish, as judiciously as possible, the large standing army which pressed so heavily upon the resources of the state. To accomplish so desirable an object, it was necessary to preserve internal peace, and to promote, as far as possible, external tranquillity ; hence, in some measure, the quiet acquiescence of Austria in the various political changes which have occurred during the last twenty years, either in France, in Spain, in Portugal, or in any other part of Europe, where her own vital interests were not directly assailed.

No state in Europe stands in so delicate a position as Austria, or is so much exposed to the varied ebullitions of democracy on the one hand, or of ambitious autocracy on the other ; for her geographical position is of such a peculiar conformation, that a political storm from the east and west, or a tumult in the north or south, is almost sure to effect one of the sensitive points of her singular organization. There is Italy and France on the one side, which mutually irritate the right arm, as it were, of the Austrian empire ; there is Prussia and the German States, on the other, with their vague rights and dreamy demands ; and above all in offensive aggression ; there

is Russia putting forth her *polypi* to entangle and embarrass the rule of Austria over the heterogeneous elements of the eastern branch of her territories.

In whatever direction the statesmen of Austria looked, there was an enemy at their gates; how to ward off that enemy has been their onerous task for these last twenty years especially. Open war, in the shape of armed battalions, has not so much terrified the ruling minds of the Austrian empire, as the secret, subtle, and insinuating influence of opinions, the new element of modern political warfare. Every expedient that ingenuity could suggest was adopted to guard against the evil consequences of that intangible yet penetrating power, but to little effect; to exclude it was as impossible as to shut out the cold air from a crazy room—like the latter it would permeate here, rush in there, and find its way either through a hole in the wall, a chink in the wood-work, or a rent in the roof. There was no keeping the atmosphere of opinions out, the question naturally suggested itself, how should that atmosphere be regulated? It was of too refined a nature for one portion of the political body, and perhaps too gross for the other; for the heavy Czech could not breathe where the more mercurial Italian, and the fiery Hungarian, could joy-

ously, and perhaps, healthily expand their lungs. It must have been no easy matter for the state doctors to regulate the distribution of so contradictory a compound; and not only to regulate it, but even to administer it at all, was the principal element of discord in the consulting chambers of those learned and luminous minds.

Perhaps no statesman ever had a more perverse fate to contend with than Prince Metternich, for he was at war almost throughout his singular career with the aspirations of his own mind, and the more enlightened dictates of his understanding. At the commencement of his official life he served a master who had a will of his own—a dogged, domineering will—and during the few years preceding its close, he was thwarted and check-mated by a colleague, whose power for that purpose was depending upon the irresolution of another, whose mind had almost every element but that which gives value to the whole—decision.

When the Prince entered political life he found a system which the Emperor Francis had been labouring to construct for twenty years upon the ruins of the singular work of reform which had been commenced by his predecessor, Joseph II. Anterior to the time of the latter monarch, the authority of the

Austrian Emperors was absolute only in name ; it was directed or restrained at every turn by a dominant aristocracy ; and Joseph, with similar sagacity to our Henry VII., endeavoured to neutralize their influence by creating a rival power to it in the people. The people, however, were not ripe in his day, for a revolt under the Imperial banner against their feudal oppressors, whose legislative *veto* was as conclusive as that of the tribunes of Rome ; and the utmost that he could effect was to centralize in his own person the supreme administration of the state. This enabled him to do much for the amelioration and improvement of his subjects ; but, unhappily, the same machinery which, in his hands, contributed so largely to the elevation of the masses, was equally available for their depression in the hands of his successor.

The policy which Francis pursued with unceasing vigour, during a reign of more than forty years, is easily explained by the circumstances which signaled his accession, and the peculiar construction of his mind. He ascended the throne in 1792, when the spirit of revolution was tearing along its terrible way, and his reign was inaugurated by a declaration of those principles of conservatism and reaction, which no defeat could compel him to abandon, no

victory induce him to relax. His policy was not merely a policy of resistance but of aggression, as it regarded his own subjects; for the mind of the Emperor was so singularly constructed, that he launched into extremes, and carried the war, as it were, into the enemy's camp; or, in other terms, he was repressive to his own people, lest they should, not that they were, become inoculated with the pernicious principles of the day. "It is no trifling task," said one who apparently knew him well, "to describe the admixture of strength and weakness, of uprightness and falsehood, of good natural powers of discrimination and vulgar shortsightedness, of ambition and apathy, of knowledge of details and general ignorance, that, unluckily for so many millions of human beings, were destined to be found combined in Francis II." And yet it is these extraordinary qualities that have invested his government with a character not otherwise explicable; and his uncompromising obstinacy was also deaf to necessity and reason, therefore his leading minister had little more to do, while he lived, than to act as the exponent of his views and the executor of his designs. It has been justly remarked, that the reign of Prince Metternich only began on the day of his old master's death; therefore it is left to

conjecture as to the course which that able statesman would have chosen had the initiation of an administrative policy been left to him at first; and it may safely be inferred that he condemned in his heart the system in which it was his fate to be involved. He would willingly have retraced his steps could he have done so with safety; for when Francis died, it must be recollected that the Prince had been occupied for nearly a quarter of a century in maintaining the repressive *statu-quo* of things, and that when liberated, the rebound must be terrible to those who were immediately instrumental in its maintenance. To stand still was impossible—to recede would have been instant destruction; and the minister, therefore, had no choice but to postpone the catastrophe to the accidental development of time. Under a different monarch, Prince Metternich would have been a very different statesman; as no diplomatist has displayed in modern times more tact and address in accomplishing his object, and few have surpassed him in executing the conceptions of his employer.

Francis was a King who rarely consulted, and never trusted any one. The functions of his servants were purely ministerial; and he seldom indulged them in the exercise of the higher prerogative of advisers. Under Joseph II., the Prince

would have been the ablest *homme de progrès* of his time, and even under Ferdinand he might have been a conciliating reformer, if he had not been thwarted in his policy, however difficult he might have found it to abandon the system which he had been so long engaged in maturing to such fatal perfection. It was the misfortune of Metternich, that in the early part of his career an arbitrary government was the only government which the head of the State would permit; and, in his later years, the only government which was possible without entirely revolutionizing the empire. From the first day of his entering the service of Francis, Prince Metternich was involved in a war against the *natural tendency of things*, and he was evidently sensible of the hopeless struggle in which he was engaged.

I have no desire to become the apologetic exponent of Prince Metternich's policy; that demands abler hands than mine; nevertheless, in giving a sketch of the Austrian empire and its political condition, it was impossible to avoid bringing that able individual somewhat prominently forward, as he was supposed to be the *Alpha* and *Omega* of that peculiar system of rule. It must also be borne in mind, when considering the cha-

racter of that eminent statesman, that the *ordre actuel* to which a man is born, be it what it may, has some claim upon his respect and attachment; and the immediate mischief which is inseparable from every change, is some apology for conservatism under every *régime*. Moreover, men have not the same opportunities of free action under despotic, as under constitutional governments; under the former, there is no medium between loyalty and disaffection; where there is no representative there is no merely political opposition; and he who would serve his country at all, must be content to serve it in the spirit of its ruling power.

I have said that M. Metternich was thwarted in his policy, during the last decade of his administration. When Providence, in its supreme wisdom, thought fit to subject the head of the empire to an infirmity—a calamity—the Councils of State were presided over by the Archduke Ludwig, whose functions were purely of a delegated nature. In the character of that excellent man there is one infirmity which completely neutralizes the otherwise enlightened attributes of his mind, namely, *indecision*; and, as the results of that quality of mind have been so fatal to the dearest interests of the empire, there ought to be no unbecoming delicacy observed

in alluding to it. Besides, justice and truth to all parties require that everything should be placed in its proper light, in order that the errors so fatally committed, and which have led to such fearful consequences, should be thoroughly exposed, and studiously avoided in the new combination of elements now in process.

In the same Cabinet with Prince Metternich was M. Kolowrat, an able minister in some respects, but somewhat wayward, and a little too wedded to his own views of policy. Unfortunately, the Austrian Cabinet was so constructed that each Minister was absolute in his own department, and only subordinate to the head of the empire. The relative position of M. Metternich and M. Kolowrat, was strikingly analogous to that of Mr. Canning and his colleagues, under Lord Liverpool's premiership; each Minister seemed independent in his own department, and acted upon his own responsibility, and apparently from the same cause—the infirmity of the head of the administration in the latter case, from the calamity which befel the head of the empire in the former. M. Metternich presided over the foreign relations of the Austrian empire, and M. Kolowrat over the interior; and it was

only in later years, when the interests of the whole kingdom more immediately required that the one should subserve the other, that a difference between those two functionaries began to openly manifest themselves. Thus, in the Treaty of Milan, which was the fulfilment of preceding negotiations and treaties, a larger amount of commercial freedom would have been extended to the empire, and a lower tariff adopted, had not M. Kolowrat determinedly opposed such concessions, apprehensive, apparently, that the small section of his countrymen engaged in manufacturing pursuits, would have been injured thereby. The Bohemian manufacturers, many of whom are the noble class, were terribly alarmed at the enlightened innovation which M. Metternich had suggested, and would have adopted, had not an influence stronger than his individual will, predominated at the time.

Again, when Prussia was artfully enforcing upon the States of Germany the necessity of adopting the *Zollverein*, with the view of strengthening her own position, the Austrian Foreign Minister would gladly have met that policy by reduced duties upon the staples of the country, in order that her influence should be preserved among European communities,

and that the vast bulk of the Austrian people should participate in the advantages of comparatively cheap commodities.

As regards, also, the impost upon Hungarian produce, which was paid upon its exit from that kingdom, the strenuous and unflinching advocate for its continuance was M. Kolowrat ; and the only instance of any note, in which he conceded his will to that of his colleague was in 1839, when the Hungarian contingent was refused, although the army required its immediate recruitment, as the state of Italy in particular, and Europe in general, from the mad-cap *escapades* of M. Thiers in France, were in a most threatening condition. In that one instance, M. Kolowrat conciliated the Hungarian Diet, although the same line of policy had been frequently advocated by his colleague.

It has frequently been remarked that Prince Metternich favoured the Jesuits, and made them instruments to keep the people in mental subjection. No remark could be wider of the truth. He found that subtle body pretty widely spread over certain portions of the empire, and exercising considerable influence within their immediate sphere, and even extending that influence to the highest places in the State ; nevertheless, he never succumbed to their

power, nor recognized their distinct interest, so much so, that he even refused a high appointment to a certain noble, although the refusal involved the inimical feelings of the whole body of the Jesuits.*

These are a few of the discordant incidents which developed themselves during the reign of Ferdinand, and which kept the whole affairs of the empire at a dead-lock, at the very time, too, that the utmost promptitude, and the profoundest ability, were required for their administration. Whenever the nominal and delegated head of the Council was appealed to, he invariably left the appellants in the same condition of uncertainty—both were right, both independent, and both in an isolated and doing nothing position. In the meantime, events were pursuing their predestined course; Europe was growing uneasy and discontented, from the aug-

* The legacy which Francis is reputed to have left to the Jesuits is a pure invention; there was no mention of that body in his will, therefore all the finely-wrought statements of his bigotry, and the craft of his minister in religiously observing his bequest, must be ranked among the historical fictions of the day, of which, especially as regards Austria and her statesmen—upon the principle of *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, I apprehend—there is no lack of abundance.

menting necessities, or the increased intelligence of her people; the demands upon the ruling spirits of the age much greater, and more complicated in all their relations, than heretofore; a great transition in the political world was on the eve of taking place which must naturally change the relative position of its component parts; yet, at such a fearful crisis, on the eve of so threatening an aspect, which required the utmost vigilance to watch their peculiar development, the Councils of the Austrian Empire were in a stand-still condition—her ablest heads completely paralyzed; and the wisdom and foresight which would have prepared her for so trying and painful a period, were completely neutralized by the indecision of one, the obstinacy of another, and the yielding acquiescence of a third.

The reconstructive policy of Austria will partake, it is to be hoped, of more enlarged and practical views than that preceding the break-up of the old. There is one guarantee in the Cabinet, that no paltry and peddling policy will prevail upon so critical a crisis; and that the necessities of the State, manifold and momentous as they are, are fully appreciated by him, however impregnated may be his colleagues with the spirit of the old *régime*.

Count Colloredo is fully aware that the only policy to be pursued, under the present complicated relations of Austria, and the heterogeneous elements of which the Empire is compounded—*is to respect the nationality of each, and to develop their material resources by liberal laws, and by a conciliatory executive.* The great desideratum of the age is material development, and by certain concessions in the tariff that boon can be secured for the Empire.

In a political point of view, the principal aim will be to strengthen the municipal laws, to encourage local legislation and administration, and to diminish that centralizing system which hitherto has, in some measure, benumbed the finest energies of the Austrian people, and materially retarded her progress. But, before this regenerative policy can be effected, there must be peace within, and tranquillity without; the Radical party, in a great measure, can prevent the violation of the former, and by so doing, will be materially instrumental in effecting the latter.

While this volume is passing through the press, the attention of the writer has been called to a pamphlet from the pen of M. Franz Palacky, on the subject of the Constitution of March, in which he strongly urges the principle of federalism in contradistinction to centralization, as the basis upon which the Austrian Government ought to be formed. The pamphlet of M. Palacky contains all the old platitudes against centralization, as though it were a principle of rule inherently bad, and not capable of application under any set circumstances; and, conversely, as though federalism possessed the opposite quality, and could not fail to produce the desiderated aim of good government, if properly applied. This mode of reasoning is a little too absolute, and the relative bearings of the question are entirely lost sight of, although the latter, as regards practical application, are of the greatest importance.

The struggle between centralization and federalism, has been carried on since the first formation of the great European communities; but it is only within the last half century that a more enlarged and accurate knowledge of each has been obtained. The tendency of centralization leads, whatever may be the form of the Constitution, to absolutism; on

the other hand, the tendency to federalism leads as directly to democracy. It is, therefore, the aim of a judicious government to bring about a fusion of both these principles of rule, so that the evils of aggregation on the one hand, and of separation on the other, may be at least partially obviated. The aim of the Austrian Government is directed to that fusion of principle, in the organization of its political machinery, so that the whole empire may attain at least an uniformity of rule, if there be no possible means of producing a homogeneity of feeling and sentiment among the different nationalities of which it is composed.

M. Palacky is a writer of some eminence, and has considerable weight among his countrymen, especially the dreamy, *idealistic*, yet dogmatic, portion, which is by no means inconsiderable in Bohemia. His pamphlet may be considered as a manifesto of the Czechs, whose watchword is *nationality*, which simply means that Bohemians must be supreme over the German population, just as much so as the Magyars were, or attempted to be over the Croatians and Servians. M. Palacky totally mistakes the instincts of the age, just as the German dreamers do who are shouting so lustily for *unity*, at the same time utterly mistaking

the true principles upon which that unity can be based. The instinct of this age is *material development*, and all principles at war with it, all antipathies opposed to it, must give way; for mankind will make everything bend to substantial gain. The Bohemians, then, who are contending for what they call nationality, are aiming a blow at their own well-being; for if all the provinces, people, and states of the Austrian empire are to be upon the footing eliminated by Palacky, there will be no pervading and cohesive power to keep them from flying asunder, and preserving them from the condition of petty democracies, with all their attendant evils.

Under the *Heptarchy* which M. Palacky contemplates for Austria, the head of the empire would be reduced to the condition of the old German emperors, who were merely the puppets of their electors; and, in lieu of one uniform, temperate, and enlightened administration, pervading and presiding over the interests of the people, there would be a number of petty corporations, as corrupt in their constitution as they would be pitiful and pettyfogging in their practice.

The following document will further illustrate the nature of the relations between the Imperial Crown of Austria and the Hungarian Diet, which has been so fully treated of in chapters IV. and VIII. The disposition to conciliate Hungary is clearly shewn; and to introduce those reforms in the political institutions of that country which were so much required, and which, if then adopted, would have materially obviated the necessity of the recent outbreak.

Contents of the royal propositions delivered by his Imperial Majesty in the sitting of the Hungarian Diet on the 20th inst., which indicate the subjects to be treated of by the present Diet :

“In the name of his imperial and royal Apostolic Majesty, our most gracious sovereign, to the most serene Archduke, to the most reverend, honourable, and respectable, also to the worthy, excellent, and noble, the wise and prudent estates of the kingdom of Hungary, and the provinces belonging to it, who either personally or as deputies, in the name of their constituents are assembled in the present Diet, graciously convoked by his said Majesty the Emperor and King, notice is hereby given—

“The appearance of a general and dangerous disorder, of an hitherto unknown kind, not having allowed of the assembling of the Diet, which his Majesty, following the dictates of his paternal heart, had firmly resolved to convoke on the 2nd of October, 1832, his Majesty has been pleased to convoke, as soon as it was practicable, the present Diet, in order that, with the aid of the

discussion of the said assembly, the public prosperity may be consolidated and secured to all future ages, without injuring the ancient constitution of the kingdom. With these elevated views, his Majesty is pleased, with distinguished paternal and royal care, to comprehend everything most conducive to the consolidation of the internal welfare of the kingdom of Hungary and of the territories annexed to it, and to draw closer the bonds uniting the several classes of the inhabitants, and wishes therefore, by virtue of his royal office, that this may be specially accomplished by appropriate laws: namely, (here follow the propositions at full length, the following is the substance of them:)

“1. The laws determining the relations of land-owners to their vassals having hitherto been enacted only from time to time, it is recommended to the estates to fix these relations by a positive law, on a footing conformable to justice, and calculated to promote the interests of all parties, and the general prosperity of the kingdom.

“2. The prompt administration of justice, in which the security of the lives and property of all the members of the community is founded, demands equal attention. His Majesty is especially anxious that a new penal code, the want of which is every day more sensibly felt, may prevent all arbitrary proceedings and embarrassment in the allotment of punishments. His Majesty wishes the tribunal to be better organized, the tedious forms of proceeding to be abridged; and, as the civil laws are likewise defective in many points, he would have these defects remedied, especially the laws respecting bills of exchange, the relations between debtor and creditor, and the tedious and expensive administration of justice which is so constant a subject of complaint.

“3. His Majesty's care is next directed to a just distribution of the public burthens.

“4. As it may be foreseen that the present Diet will sit longer than usual, his Majesty particularly wishes, with respect to the daily allowance of the deputies, that the estates, taking into consideration the situation of the tax-payers, will immediately discuss the question by whom these allowances shall be paid, and what proportions? and make a declaration suitable to the generosity of the nation, and of the care to relieve that class which, from its situation, has many other burdens to support.

“5. Relates to the repayment of a sum of 262,000 florins, which has been advanced by the Treasury.

“Such is the communication which his Majesty has ordered to be made to the estates, and his Majesty has no doubt that they will endeavour to effect what is so necessary for their own good and that of their posterity, with such active zeal that as little time as possible may be lost, and that with prudence and deliberation, incessant application may not be necessary.

“By his Majesty’s command,

“GEORGE BANTAL.

“Presburg, Dec. 20, 1832.”

THE END.

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